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ON SOLWAY BRIDGE.

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CHAPTER I.

To take stock of oneself is usually a barren pastime, though saints and sages recommend it as tonic for the soul. Indulging in it, Bede Delaval found it bitter rather than beneficent, and though bitterness is a recognised attribute of tonics, it profited him nothing.

He stood on the mile-long bridge that crosses the Solway, not far from the mushroom city of Gretna, which sprang into being during the Great War. One end of the bridge rests in England, the other in Scotland. It was built to carry over the railway running to Annan, and the red rust of the rails and the great gaps in the iron plates since its disuse make it perilous and melancholy.

Delaval had evaded the notice of those who would have warned him off, and his feet, hollow-sounding on the remaining round-backed plates, had carried him to the very centre of the bridge, where, with the wind in his ears, he stood, a speck above the shifting waters of the great tidal inlet. He had come to this vantage point to watch for the far-famed bore which precedes the flood tide. From where he stood he had a wide field of vision, including not only the wet sand and slime, sharply sparked by the flashes on the wings of feeding sea-birds, but the small irregular houses on the northern side, which broke the scarred line of the shore.

He was on a holiday, so early in the season that it might be called a deferred spring, rather than a summer, holiday. This was because he was of very little account in the publisher's office where he worked. Others, of more value reckoned in terms of weekly remuneration, had to have their choice of the season.

Delaval's only real possession was the core, the self within, so constructed as to be responsive to Divine inspiration, as a magnet responds to the current sent through it. Thus he was ultimately

open to a range of power unlimited in extent, only he did not know it. The core was so swathed in the wrappings of egoism, and a deliberate resistance to sensation, that it lay useless.

His hazel eyes carried in them a hint of wistfulness that made many women look a second time at his pale, intractable face; but they invariably turned away quickly, chilled by that defiant, almost impudent, set of the lips which repelled sympathy. Of medium height, slenderly built, rather badly than shabbily dressed, Delaval would have passed unnoticed in a crowd, except that he had somehow, mysteriously, that command of movement which compels respect.

He had been born within sound of the great breakers of the North Sea on the other side of England. The three miles that separated Dalness, his father's place, from the sea-coast of Northumberland had been in his earliest days a barrier, not only to the sea but to himself. For his memory dated back only to that day when he had come alive, having found his way to the sea alone. He was then about ten. From thence onward he was soul-free for many years, until the blackness of resentful misery had imprisoned him again.

He had never been of much account in his own small family circle anyway; his mother had died before he could remember her, and the difference in age and temperament between himself and his only brother Cuthbert, at that time a fine well-grown lad of sixteen, a man in strength of purpose and grip of life, had emphasised his insignificance. Cuthbert at sixteen was his father's confidant, agent and adviser. Bede, who only knew his brother from afar, admired him with an intensity that amounted to a passion. He had begun his school life at Aysgarth while Cuthbert was at Harrow, and by the time he reached Oxford, Cuthbert had been for some years a practical land agent, for he had passed straight into the army from his O.T.C., served throughout the four terrible years without mishap, then refused to go to the University on the ground that he had already developed far beyond it, and had taken up his position at Dalness quite naturally.

Bede, plunged suddenly into Oxford, without advice or caution, had responded to the spurious freedom conferred upon him by thrusting aside what would nowadays be called his 'inferiority complex,' and displaying himself as spendthrift and casuist. He was entering on his second year of residence when his father died.

Cuthbert of course stepped, with hardly any change in his life,

into the property, and he secured also the lion's share of the personality. Bede was abruptly made aware that henceforth his debts, his conduct and his opinions were no one's concern but his own. He who had expected censure, expostulation, and a demand for amendment from his brother, in a paternal rather than a fraternal style, found none of these things. Cuthbert treated him with detached courtesy, offering him the best cigars but no advice. He was so hospitable that even Bede found out, before the funeral was over, that he was a guest and not an inmate of the house. He discovered the reason for his brother's costiveness in rebuke when he learned that out of his comparatively small portion he was expected to pay the college debts already incurred, as well as the rest of his terms. Strict legality might have determined otherwise, as he had been a minor whilst he piled up the indebtedness, though he was now just of age. But Bede, listening to this brother, so admirably sure of himself, so well principled, and apparently so considerate, did not even moot that plea. In fact he left Dalness with his admiration for Cuthbert reinforced and heightened—to be so well balanced, possess so much judgment, to know exactly what to do in any situation—what splendid good fortune!

Not knowing exactly what else to do, Bede settled the debts, drifted through another year of Oxford, made a fool of himself in more ways than one, and then, having tied a millstone round his neck, left in disgust, and went to London with what remained of his patrimony. Here, he joined a good many clubs, of by no means the best sort, and got into a set of men who possessed either wits or money far in excess of his. He frequented race-courses, lived at the rate of about two thousand a year, became a frequenter of several night clubs, and at six and twenty found himself on the verge of bankruptcy.

As Leonardo da Vinci said, 'a painter has two objects to depict: man and the intention of his soul.' No painter could, under that dictum, have made a good likeness of Bede Delaval, for his soul had no intentions at all. He had been wildly generous, in that impracticable way which brings no sweetness to either giver or receiver. He had entertained lavishly without taking the trouble to find out costs beforehand. He had been generous, while he was extravagant, which shows that a man may grasp two ends of a pole at the same time.

The shock of threatened bankruptcy brought him up short; he fell back on his inherited code, and found that bankruptcy was

damnable meanness. He must pay his debts in full, and spend the rest of his life working them off. The solicitor who advised him, assured him that what he had would not run to more than 1s. 7½d. in the £. In his distress and perplexity he wrote to his brother, suggesting that a lump sum might be made over to him, on which he would pay interest, whilst he worked to replace the capital.

Cuthbert meantime had married Ina Whateley. Bede had only seen her once—at the wedding, when she had swept, tall and fair and very rigid, up the aisle, to where he stood behind his brother, officiating as best man. In her movements there was the same assurance of manner which he so much admired in Cuthbert, but in her it antagonised him at once. As he had never, since the marriage, been invited to Dalness, he set it down to his sister-in-law's inimical influence.

Cuthbert answered his appeal for help in the settlement of his London debts in almost derisory fashion, pointing out that he had now a 'family'—two little girls—and thus could do nothing. Therefore the bankruptcy went through, and all intercourse with Dalness ceased.

Bede, like his great namesake, had a literary turn, and when the necessity for earning his own living was forced upon him he thought of writing. But as he obviously could not keep himself by writing yet awhile, he turned, with touching simplicity, to a publisher's office, as a means whereby to learn his trade. The well-known publisher, Reginald Hanaper, had been his fellow clubman at one of the more reputable clubs, in his prosperous days, and he was no less friendly now when approached from another angle. The publisher was shrewd; he knew that this young man had been well off, that he came of a good family, and probably there was money in the offing; as he did not intend to remain in his office all his days, and had no son or daughter to succeed him, he surmised that, while for the present Delaval might fill a clerk's duties as well as another, he might later develop into an asset and put money into the business or possibly buy it. It was no bad speculation to bind such a youth to the firm. Therefore he gave him a berth at three pounds a week in his office in Fetter Lane.

That was two years ago, and Bede had since then been drugged with the monotony of office routine into quiescence. He was incredibly hypersensitive, and the shock of his brother's attitude toward the bankruptcy had taken from him a great deal of his not very abundant vitality. Yet it had not disillusioned him of his

ideal. To be robbed of his notion that Cuthbert was splendid would have been to rape from him his last remaining hold on idealism. He perversely clung to the belief that Ina was exercising a disastrous influence on her husband, and this in spite of the fact that Cuthbert's strength of character was his glory! But self-induced beliefs rely on desires, not on facts.

Bede's idea that he would be well on the way to becoming a literary man by entering a publishing firm in a humble capacity had been quickly dissipated. His duties were purely mechanical. He spent hours in checking the vast and interminable pages of tissue-leaved books, scrawled with unpromising items, requiring a minimum of brain but a maximum of time for their careful perusal. Other operations were on the same level, and served well to induce the torpor which succeeded the great crash.

But now he was beginning to wake up.

He had chosen Bowness-on-Solway for his fortnight's holiday because he ached for the flat yellow of sea-washed sands, the weird cries of sea-birds, and the cold creeping of the yeasty foam. The coast of Northumberland was closed to him, with its piles of weather-worn stone, and its flattened or tilted slabs of island, set in a frothy grey sea of indefinite misty extent. So he had chosen this parallel retreat, on the other side of the narrowing head of England.

East of the bridge, at such a distance they seemed like marionettes, were half a dozen men carrying the enormous poles of the haaf-nets on their shoulders; they had waded silently into the cold sea-water until they were up to their oxters. There they stood, under the swelling breast of sand, where a salmon might glide upward with the incoming flood. As the water deepened, the man on the outside of the line would leave his place and shift mechanically to the inner end, otherwise they would make no motion, take no active steps to bring fish into their nets, but stand, stand, frozen and rigid, grey and weather-worn in their oilskins, waiting for what Providence might send.

A feeble spark had flashed within the soul of the young man on the bridge: it was the first possibility of an awakening within him. A thrill of agony ran through him as this spark of self-purpose, ambition, and the craving to express or fulfil himself, made itself felt. What was he? What had he become? And what should he have been?

If Cuthbert had helped, he might now have been in a position in unison with his instincts and upbringings—if Cuthbert had not

married he *would* have helped ; so Ina was the obstacle, Ina barred the avenue to his attaining anything but drudgery in life.

His mind began to revolve wildly, seeking avenues of escape, and thus he came up against the worst obstacle of all—his own wife. He was married—curse it! Married—yet he had never had a domestic life. Cuthbert did not know this, nor yet Ina—there was some comfort in that ; her lofty patronage would turn to bitter disdain were that feeble chapter in his history unrolled before her.

Bede had been twenty-one when he had been caught at Oxford, being flattered by the attentions of the soft, plump creature, below him socially, and above him in age. He had been initiated by her into those mysteries of the flesh which he had not had the hardihood to probe himself, and would have left unelucidated. A short period of congratulation on his knowingness, a sort of pluming of his manhood, was all that he got out of it, and this came to as abrupt an end as the glow of iron flung into a pail of water, for when Carrie informed him, in the usual way, of coming consequences, she prevailed upon her simpleton to go through a form of marriage.

In only one phase did the subsequent events differ from the ordinary story of its kind ; she was not passionate, and did not desire his embraces or even his company ; she was a soul-lazy woman, and wanted merely to live without having to work for it. The strenuous months when she had tried to be subtle in order to ensnare her victim had exhausted her, and she was quite ready to sink into the sluggish parasite for the rest of her life. After marriage Bede had kept her. That was all she required. His folly had never been discovered by the authorities, and he, the inept, the futile, who did not know what to do with his own life, was thus burdened with another. But it was only one other, for the consequences never materialised. Carrie lived with a crony in a small house in a red-brick row, forming one of the links in that chain of similar houses which threads the suburbs of English towns, garnished with crooked poles, serving the double purpose of bearing world-wide news and carelessly washed clothes.

Mentally sluggish as well as in a bodily sense, the woman accepted Bede's word as to his means, and took what he gave her. His crash indeed was a disappointment, but she was too lazy to do more than express a kind of contemptuous pity for him. Out of the three pounds a week he managed to earn after that, he regularly sent her one, and living as she did, with shared expenses, she made it serve.

Carrie! He visualised her. Slow in movement, sloppy in dress, with a rather yellowish-white complexion that always looked dirty, and a very soft skin. She was no more to be wounded by anything he said than a rice pudding would be. She and her crony, Mrs. Jalap, who owned a small greengrocer's shop run by a foreman, lived in their stuffy, muddled room, drinking inexhaustible tea and carrying on indiscriminate and spasmodic chatter.

Mentally Bede compared her with Ina, his sister-in-law. He fancied he could see the two of them advancing on him from the blue mists at the end of the bridge on which he was standing. Ina, tall and fair and stately, and, peeping from behind her, this smiling, sly face on a loosely moving figure, half her height and twice her breadth. Faugh!

These two were fixed facts, and he could not get past either of them—they barred his way. But was there not something he could do to rise? Inspired by the newly generated spark within, his mind revolved again.

If he attained a really good post at the office and became the right-hand man of Mr. Reginald Hanaper, might he not in time become even a partner?

Reginald Hanaper acknowledged by his manner that he knew Delaval to be, as he was himself, a public school and 'Varsity man. There is a freemasonry among such. But here again a sinister figure loomed up, blocking the avenue to success. A very portly and lumbering figure. Joshua Stampfield, head clerk, cashier, and confidential man of Messrs. Hanaper. He had been in the firm for immemorial years, even before the present chief, who was a man of about forty-five, had come as a lad to join his father and uncle. Thus he had acquired that kind of overriding position which authority and experience impress upon youth, and which it is difficult to shake. Reginald Hanaper, a good-natured man, did not exactly fear Stampfield, but he was afraid of Stampfield deserting him. As a matter of fact, though he enjoyed the literary side of his profession, he had never cared much for the material details, and these Stampfield handled with enthusiasm and confidence.

Stampfield stood supreme in the counting-house, a vicegerent none might gainsay, and from the first he had been suspicious of the latest joined clerk. Their two natures were antagonistic. Bede Delaval, who felt kindly towards his fellow creatures, and whose nature was altogether set to the side of good in its truest sense, with a suppressed longing for beauty and grandeur and wide

spaces and solitude, which only those souls capable of great deeds can have, was yet poor of purpose, diffident of self, infirm of action, and lacking common sense—in fact what may be summed up as a poor creature.

No one could have called Joshua Stampfield a poor creature. He was immaculate, in dress of a slightly old-fashioned style, with the vest more cut-away at the neck than is customary now, and a black bow tie under a high, pointed collar. His large face, clean shaven but for a prominent grey moustache, was inflexible of purpose and lofty in expression; he would have made a splendid model for a very popular undenominational minister. His gold eyeglass and cord were inseparable from his appearance, and none, not even Mr. Hanaper, ever dared attempt a jest with him.

Now Stampfield, deliberately and of set purpose, so arranged that Delaval should never see the chief alone, or come in contact with him, save on the rarest occasions. This blocking process was so effective that Mr. Hanaper, who had at first rather singled out 'this poor devil who had come such a caulker,' had now almost forgotten him. Bede felt bitterly that were only Stampfield removed there would be none to compete with himself for position of right-hand man.

Yes, even if he disregarded the two women, and tried to get on in another direction, Stampfield barred the way. Behind Ina and Carrie stood the massive bulk of the unimpeachable Stampfield. Bede laughed suddenly aloud, seeing him in imagination following them on to the bridge. He would overtop them both, and outbulk them on either side, even the squashy Carrie. But immediately he sobered; it was no joke; Stampfield blocked him from any possibility of professional advancement and would certainly not let him force his way upward in the Hanaper office, which was his only chance.

Was there no other way of escape? There flashed into Bede's mind the thought of his cousin, Robert Morris, who lived at Kingston-on-Thames. He was only a second cousin, moderately well off, a widower without children and well on in years. He had no nearer relations than the Delavals. He had been as friendly with them in earlier years as it was in his rather crab-like nature to be friendly with anyone, but he had shown himself gravely displeased at the lamentable fact of the bankruptcy, and since then Bede had never dared to present himself again at the house on the river. There was however the possibility, just the possibility, that he might

leave his money to his nearest relatives, or even die intestate, which would come to the same thing. It did not seem likely, for he would probably be sealed of that vast army of persons who, in their wills at any rate, prefer to endow institutions or scholarships for the emblazoning of their own names, sooner than help living beings of kin to them on their difficult way through the world. From what Bede remembered of Cousin Robert he did not suppose he would wish to do good posthumously in any direction, still, as he would have to leave his money behind, some of it might come his way. Robert Morris had two passions which ruled his life, the collection of prehistoric flints, and fishing, and nothing had ever been allowed to interfere with these two absorbing pursuits.

Bede visualised him now, as he had visualised the others : a very short, rather stout man, whom someone had once unkindly likened to a pig on hind legs. He had a high domed forehead and bushy eyebrows with small, twinkling eyes. He liked a jest, and his own ego, embodying his own tastes, was even more supremely the god of his worship than it is with most of us. Did he take his place at the tail of that procession he would be hidden, but as he wobbled rather in his walk on his insecure legs, he might be glimpsed occasionally.

There they were, the four of them, advancing on this rotten old bridge—then supposing it gave way suddenly, and he, Bede, floating in nothingness, exultantly saw them delivered into the swirl of that fast-running tide and so carried out of his way for ever into limbo ?

Then he checked himself. It did not do to think these blood-thirsty thoughts. Life and death were determined by some Higher Power which he firmly believed to be beneficent. Possibly also there was a Power of Evil of definitely less authority, but able on occasion to traverse the decrees of the Higher Power. It was true, of course, that the great fight had been fought once for all, and the issue determined, but might there not, for some inscrutable purpose, be times when the lesser power was allowed to have its way in such a matter as death, the actual date of which was really, when you came to think of it, of so very little consequence to beings who were living in infinity of space and eternity of time ? Nevertheless, it didn't do to wish people dead, even though death might be no evil to them.

Bede shook himself and looked around. He had stood motionless so long that the bore had come, and passed, without attracting his attention. It couldn't have been much of a one, nothing like

the racing furrow three or four feet high that he had been led to expect.

He turned and gazed to westward. A thin trail of cloud flagged out from the flattened sugar-loaf of Criffel's peak like the smoke from a volcano. Orange rifts in the clouds mocked the orange moon that sank over a line of fishing smacks, equidistant, floating silently into Annan harbour. The black scaur had disappeared, and the sand-banks were churned up into thick yellowish soup. The fishermen had gathered up their gear, and were splashing homeward.

CHAPTER II.

BEDE DELAVAL clung to the rounded and rusty rail, and stared fixedly at the hurrying flood beneath him, until it seemed that he was drifting out to sea with inevitable and even swiftness. The mysterious greyness of an English evening in early summer thickened around him; earth, air and water, saturated with it, became as one. He was alone in the void of an indeterminate fluidity. Unable to move, pinned by the body, which had lost sensation, the soul writhed away from something that menaced it, yet was gradually sucking it in, striving to exact from it a tribute it was longing and yet loath to give. What this tribute was, the man in possession of the soul knew not, except that it was evil, and that it should be withheld.

At the same time he understood as he had never yet understood his own futility and feebleness of purpose. For he was actually acquiescing, letting himself drift, and giving up this struggle, which was not like other struggles in that it had no convulsive movements or rending of the muscles, but was rather a constant pull resembling a slow, steady suction or magnetism. The magnet was horribly rich in allurements; he gloated the more as he came within range of it, and with each instant he knew that its power was increasing on him forcibly. And even while he knew he ought to hold back, he felt in anticipation the horrible joy of being overcome at last.

Sharp shoots of despair intervened at his own nervelessness, but these, at first poignant, grew fainter, as the ever-alluring goal increased in power and attractiveness. But it was not until the last ounce of resistance was dying away, that the goal toward which he was being thus drawn revealed itself.

Framed in billowy greyness faces appeared, growing larger, to

a size that seemed horrible, grotesque, and with a disgusting quality of flabby unreality that took no heed of the limitations of the material world ; they floated about him and over him, and round him, gross in their immensity.

Ina !

Carrie !

Joshua Stampfield !

Cousin Robert !

Then he knew the purpose of this astounding experience, with an intimate clearness of brain no human words could have conveyed. They were his, these lives, his for the taking, and he had yielded ! He could not now withdraw even if he would, and he did not want to do so. His very horror of those faces in their monstrous size made him brutal. A deliberate cruelty had poured like water into his veins, and he gloated with ecstasy on the idea that these beings, with their self-assurance, their complete armour of egoism, were at his mercy. He had sometimes thought of egoism as the main engine within man ; he had longed for it. He had seen the triumph of the calmly and wholly egoistical achieved without pain to themselves ; they had seemed unaware of the sufferings of their victims. Now this glorious gift of egoism had passed into him. He too could be secure in his own purpose, utterly callous to suffering inflicted. He was as a god, supremely indifferent to the fate of those who obstructed him. No, not indifferent, but relentless. Indifference supposed no feeling of any kind, and he had a sense of triumphant achievement, as he saw the grey water arise like an enormous and controlled tidal wave and sweep away these obstacles one after another. First there went the fair and cold face of his sister-in-law, smooth even in its monstrosity ; then the horrid, dirty, badly coloured face of Carrie, his wife ; next the large, profound, leathery-fleshed face of Joshua Stampfield, with its opaque grey eyes ; and then—no—as the face of Cousin Robert arose and swung before him, the thought of resistance, long deadened within him, arose, and in this strange dimension of space wherein he found himself thought was action. The thought rent him with an agony, resembling the agony felt in a dead limb returning to life after being frozen, but a million times intensified.

The agony wrenched him back into the body, and with its rending came a clammy faintness, so that he very nearly lost the body again instantaneously, half slipping between the widely set iron rails of the parapet ; it was only by clutching with nerveless

hands he managed to hang on a second, whilst his brain cleared, and he regained his feet.

What interval had elapsed while he was undergoing this amazing experience he could not tell. It was almost dark. Only one light glowed, a yellow square from the small window of the house on the shore where he was lodging. But for that, nerveless, toneless, profoundly disturbed as he was, he might indeed have ended his own life by slipping voluntarily into that almost indistinguishable mass of water below. It was the human symbol that held him back, the fire that has throughout the ages marked the human from the brute.

The wind had risen, carried forward by the sweep of the incoming tide; it thrummed wild melodies on the limpet-encrusted iron posts below the bridge; the smell of brine and seaweed and of flabby, tenacious sea-creatures was in the air.

Bede stood still; he had lost sensation in his hands and arms, and any movement was mechanical. He was very cold, yet sweat was dripping from his chin. The vibrations of that awful and unknown dimension into which he had been carried were still tingling in his nerves; the sight of the unearthly had tuned him up to a power of sensation far beyond any mortal limit. He was appalled but triumphant. As the flow of returning blood penetrated from his brain to the furthest corners of his human body, he began to gesticulate and shout, but suddenly he fell quiet, and gazed at the light of the cottage, trying to steady himself.

What had happened to him? Was this madness? What experience was it that he had passed through? Had he been merely self-hypnotised by the rushing of the furious water?

Feeling like an empty sack, limp and flaccid, he stumbled back across the bridge the way he had come; scrambled down the large slant of stone blocks on which it rested shoreward; splashed heavily through the sea-sand and slime, and stumbled over the tussocky grass and into the pools which cut it up, and at last arrived, panting and white-faced, at the door of Mrs. Tynecastle.

She stared, as she saw him enter her comfortable kitchen.

'You'll kill yourself for sure,' she said kindly, and yet a little tartly. 'Your tea's been waiting this hour past, and I always *did* say I wouldn't do for the folk from Lunnon.'

He mumbled excuses, and ate of the fresh fish which she placed before him with hot weak tea. He could not meet her eyes; he was stunned, turned upside down, and so confused by what had

happened to him that his one longing was to seek refuge in sleep. This he soon did, being completely exhausted. He slept so dreamlessly under the neat and homely patchwork counterpane, that when he awoke with the sun shining into the tiny square of window he did not know where he was, though he had been here now for four days. When he got out into that sunlight, after a breakfast of flounders and fleshy, half-done toast, he felt almost exhilarated.

'It was a vision,' he said to himself as he set off westward, with an enormous sandwich and a thermos flask of tea in his pocket. He would spend the whole day in the open, not going far but dawdling round the 'island,' as the long westward-stretching peninsula was locally called. Thus he would recover tone. Reaching the road-bridge, which crossed the end of the deserted single line, he stood staring earnestly at the narrowing rails running over the water and rising at the Annan end. 'No dream was ever like it,' he admitted reluctantly. 'I gave in too, just at the last; there was no hope for me once I'd begun to slip toward it, and I didn't want to stop. The enemy was within me. All that lot—in my hand'—he crisped his long fingers—'to fling into the sea, but not that sea lying blue and silver streaked low between its low banks—no—a sea they would never get out of. Suppose it were really true? Bosh!'

A few children were running and skipping along the madder-brown flat sand on their way to school; the gulls alighting and retreating as they advanced made flashes of light; there was the musical crying of some indistinguishable sea-birds in the air. The whole scene was bathed in the freshness of clean space.

A man in corduroys, with brass-bound toes, passed, walking after some cattle with swishing tails; the neat little black-and-white sheep-dog sniffed at the stranger's legs, and watched him warily.

'He gave them to me, the whole four,' said Bede aloud.

The man, hearing speech, looked back, but concluding it was not meant as civility, passed on.

Bede did not go very far that day, but finding shelter under a turf-built wall, watched with the glasses he had brought for the purpose, the oyster-catchers scuttering about on the wet sand, until they suggested an animated pavement of black and white marble. Their chattering faintly reached him on the sea-fresh wind. That the wind was usually from the Atlantic, was shown by the bend of the stubborn trees, which, remonstrant at a stiff angle, pointed almost uniformly inland.

He meditated profoundly on his previous day's experience. It was so uncanny, so distinctly outside any of his adventures, he could not cast it from him. It was not only the dream, vision, or whatever it was, but the state of his own body during its happening and thereafter that disturbed him. That entire deadness of physical sensation, the while he had lived in his mental or spiritual part with an intensity to which any intensity of the body was feeble by comparison, was inexplicable, and then there was the extreme perturbation of nerve and muscle in the body when he returned to it. What did these things mean?

The more he reflected on it, the more he felt that the sinister part of the adventure was that it was not God but the Devil with whom he had had intercourse—if it was anything at all. There were precedents for that. Faust, for instance; but Faust was only a figment of Goethe's imagination. Perhaps the image conjured up by Goethe had had its parallel in his own mind, and he too had been the victim of self-hypnotism. He recalled the saying of Darwin: 'By the imagination man unites, independently of the will, images and ideas, and thus creates brilliant and novel results.' But against this he set the fact that the images and ideas of his vision had not previously lain in his experience at all.

As he meditated, he was conscious of an uneasy feeling that lay below his shifting consciousness, and when, having searched, he found it, he discovered it to be his own flabbiness against the progressive effort which someone or something had made to draw him in. He had known that it was his part to resist, and yet his utmost power had not sufficed to do more than slow down that sucking-in process infinitesimally. That was a horrible thought. If there were another world in waiting when we left the body behind—and whatever else was not clear in this ghastly struggle, belief in that had emerged irrefragably—then he was condemned, for he had no resistant power that could count against evil. Nevertheless he had to remember that the evil without was helped on by the evil within. The thing toward which he was being drawn was what he desired, or evil could not have had this irresistible power over him. His own reaching out toward evil had been the lever or fulcrum by which evil had had the power to start him off on the slope. In other words, before any of this had happened, while he had stood upon the bridge in possession of his bodily senses, he had deliberately summoned up the gaolers of his life one by one, and cast them mentally into that rough and tumbling flood of yeasty froth. He

had seen their battered bodies drift with the tide, swept away in its race, never more to trouble him. If he had not done so he would not have been lying within the orbit of evil.

Had a man then no right to will evil for his own good even in thought? It was too difficult of comprehension for him. Thought was in his mind and did not necessarily mean action by the body. Was not the mind the body?

'Whether in the body, or out of the body, I cannot tell,' so St. Paul had said after his vision, and Bede Delaval repeated the words, feeling himself in like case.

Why had not the rag of flesh, when deserted and inert, slipped through the parapet and so ended it all? But then presumably he would have found himself in that whirling and horrible void. He shuddered at the idea of that slow creeping onward, perhaps for ever. Creeping indeed? How was one to tell? There was nothing to judge by. Perhaps indeed he had spun forward through space at a speed so terrific that even light itself could not keep pace.

The only net result he could definitely claim was that he was changed by this experience, greatly changed. His ideas were changed, his outlook on the world was changed, his grip on life was changed. True or imaginary, the experience had changed him as nothing in his previous life had had the power to do. He felt no longer diffident, feeble, jealous of those who 'bossed' him, but ready to take his own part, even contemptuous of some of them. Old Stampfield, for instance—a fig for old Stampfield!

Toward afternoon he climbed into a short, sturdy Scots fir, bent over flat as a hand may be bent at the wrist, and lying on the strong outspread boughs as on a bed, ate his sandwich and dozed, worn out by exploring so much undiscovered mental country.

Later, when he was arousing himself to get down, he saw a small and battered car progressing slowly along the narrow, sandy road below. As it came nearer he could see that the man in it was a clergyman, in a pepper-and-salt suit.

The crackling and rustling he made overhead attracted the clergyman, who stopped and said, 'Hullo!'

Bede scrambled down and approached him. 'Hope I'm not doing any harm,' he said politely and rather deprecatingly. 'I'm here on a holiday.'

'Not the man staying with Mrs. Tynecastle, are you?' the Rector asked in that curious inverted phraseology so puzzling to the foreigner.

'Yes.'

The clergyman had got out of his car and stood there, blinking in the sun: a funny little man, very short, with a square, chumpy face that might have belonged to a farm labourer. At first sight his expression was unpleasant, being so definite that it amounted to aggressiveness. The eyes, small and deep-set, betrayed an eager intelligence in things which may be seen on earth; but they were eyes of one plane only, no vision of the unseen deepened and irradiated them.

'Get in; I'll take you back,' he said with brusque kindness. Bede accepted. 'Are you a priest?' he asked a little nervously as the car started.

'No!' asserted the clergyman, with such definite repudiation that his companion jumped internally and apologised.

'I'm priested of course, but I'm Church of England. My name is Hatherton, Lawrence Hatherton. I'm a crank and a bachelor; at least I understand I'm supposed to be a crank; from my point of view, naturally, I'm the one sane man in a parish of lunatics.'

The tacit demand of a reciprocal courtesy made Bede say, 'I'm a Delaval from the other side of England.'

'Not a Delaval of Dalness?'

'My father was.'

'And you're not?'

'There are two of us,' answered Bede, equivocally.

'And you're the other? Just so. I understand. Besides, I believe I've heard of you.'

Bede was wondering what it was he had heard, and whether it concerned the bankruptcy, when Mr. Hatherton broke out abruptly: 'I've got to stop here to see a sick child, and after that, if you've nothing better to do, I'll take you along with me to call on someone really worth seeing.'

When he ran out of the cottage, before which he had drawn up, a few minutes later, he picked up the conversation.

'Varsity man?'

'Yes, Pembroke, Oxford.'

'I'm Pemmer, Cambridge.'

They followed the coast-line with its soft drabs imposed on the blue-greys of the Solway reaches; then they neared Mrs. Tyne-castle's cottage, which stared with a virtuous air at the unbroken expanse before it.

Bede made a gesture as if to stop.

'Aha, but I'm not going to part with you so easily,' said the Rector. 'One doesn't get a Varsity man on whom to air one's peculiarities every day. Mrs. Tynecastle do you well?'

'Quite.'

'She's a woman who grudges her own generosity. Not an uncommon trait in human nature that; people are much oftener jealous of their virtues than their defects; she scolds herself after every burst of liberality; nice question whether she'll be credited for the withdrawal or the outflowing impulse. I'm taking you on to see a friend of mine, Matilda Churrs; she's eighty-eight, and a witch.'

He gave a peculiar sidelong glance at his companion as he spoke, and was rewarded by the quick surrender of Bede's attention. 'Got you that time? Guessed you'd had some queer experience. Don't want to hear about it, but you may want to hear about old Matilda. She charms away ringworm. Fact. I've seen it done. Obstinate cases too. A seaman came here once, had his forearm covered with it. Had tried everything. No good. Heard of Matilda. She treated him for a week, and it vanished. She makes no charge, but she has her troubles, for she finds human nature unchanged since the greatest days in Palestine. It's always a case of 'but where are the nine?' She can't take it philosophically, accepting it as an addition to her store of human nature lore; she frets. Here we are.' He pulled up his shapeless and battered car at the roadside with an adroitness that bespoke long usage, and an intricate knowledge of its many defects. They were now a little inland, beside a small red-brick cottage, and as they made for the door it opened, and an old lady stood on the step. She was not very tall, and had the loose lips of those who have lost every tooth in their mouths. She had a characteristic way of putting a long-fingered, surprisingly well-kept hand over her mouth every few seconds, as if to check involuntary revelations. Her fawn-coloured hair was thin, and lay smoothly parted above her high white forehead, but there was no grey in it. She retained a natural dignity, in spite of the homeliness of her small cross-wise shawl and blue check apron.

She greeted the Rector with a long chuckle of pleasure, and drew them both into her little living-room. It had the warm, slightly smug smell of many such rooms, but was high, with an abnormally high black painted chimney-piece, on which were two of the china dogs now much sought after. On the gaily patterned American

cloth of the table was an enormous hour-glass, a real hour-glass such as used to be set by preachers in the days when length was an honoured attribute of sermons.

Having offered them crumbly biscuits as refreshment, Matilda sat down, and she and the Rector carried on a conversation which, on his part, was obviously designed to enlighten the visitor. The details of the ringworm cure were discussed. The secret, it appeared, must pass from woman to man, and man to woman, or its efficacy would be lost. She had had it from her father, and must pass it on to some man.

‘Don’t you be too long about it now, Matilda,’ he adjured her.

‘I’ll mind,’ she said simply. ‘When the hour’s struck for me I’ll be telling ye.’

‘It might come suddenly.’

‘So it might, but I’d know that and a’. Quick or lang, ye’ll may be sure I’ll get my warning; I can hear the shifting of the sand in the glass.’

Almost mechanically her long, shapely fingers smoothed the sides of the hour-glass where the red sand ran in an unbroken dribble from top to bottom.

‘It’s company for me,’ she explained to the newcomer, looking at him with that far-away yet penetrating glance that reminded him of the waters of the Solway, with their undercurrent of resistless force. ‘As some have their pipes and ithers their knitting, so I have my glass, and setting here I turn him over and again, and I hear the sands running smooth-like and quiet, and all’s well.’

‘Aren’t you afraid of living here by yourself?’ asked Delaval.

‘Feared? No. What’s to be feared on?’ She looked at him with her penetrating yet soft stare. ‘You’re not like *him*,’ she said abruptly, indicating the Rector by way of comparison.

‘How’s that?’ asked Mr. Hatherton.

She continued to fix Bede with her eyes until he moved uncomfortably. ‘You’ll be easy to get at,’ she said enigmatically.

‘What do you mean?’ he stammered.

‘You’ll be knowing right well what I mean,’ she replied with a touch of scorn. ‘But not him, not him!’ She turned to Mr. Hatherton and laid her hand with a strange movement of affection on his knee. ‘He’s the other sort, strong and true, but he’ll not know aught until he gets there—he differs from you and me—but ’tis no matter.’ She closed her eyes and sat back, passing her hand over her mouth as if afraid of saying too much.

Taking this as a sign of weariness, the two men left. When they were outside Mr. Hatherton asked abruptly, 'How long are you staying here?'

'A fortnight.'

'And you've been?'

'Four days.'

'Come and put up with me at the rectory.'

'It's very good of you, but Mrs. Tynecastle——'

'I'll make it all right with her. You can pay her what you arranged for the rooms, and she always makes a favour of doing the cooking for visitors; they all do; she'll be glad to get out of that.'

'Perhaps.'

'Yes, perhaps. When they make a favour of it they naturally don't like the favour flung away too lightly; she'll wish to go on with her groaning self-sacrifice to the end.'

Bede laughed. 'She certainly does expect me to comment on every dish she produces.'

'I'll tell her off.'

At the cottage the Rector flung himself hastily out of the car, and summoned Mrs. Tynecastle from feeding her hens at the back of her cottage. Before she could speak he began: 'I've captured your lodger and am carrying him off. Now, not a word about it. We all know how good you've been in cooking—four days, three meals a day, say a dozen meals—for him. It's as much as can be expected of a woman in your position—or what can't be expected—I've heard that too. You'll get your money for the rooms and no trouble. There.'

'I've not said anything to the young gentleman about the trouble as I'm aware of,' began Mrs. Tynecastle, bristling.

But Bede's handsome settlement mollified her, and they parted in as friendly a way as he could have wished.

CHAPTER III.

AUGUST Bank Holiday at the Oval, where the pure concentrated essence of bank-holidayism is to be found unadulterated. Surrey tackling Yorkshire, the great rivals of the north and south being in the zenith of their performance. The god of holidays had been propitious too, and on the previous day had started what the newspapers love to call 'a heat wave.'

The Oval was packed, crammed to its utmost capacity, and the

August sun, for once living up to a bygone reputation, shone down on hot asphalt, wet-faced men in sagging collars, and wilted and stray bits of paper, and brought out that peculiar odour which is incense to the devotees of the cricket ground.

In the sixpenny seats every inch of seating was occupied, yet every one was ready to squeeze up just that extra half-inch which made for greater discomfort. Handkerchiefs of every colour and every degree of stain were suspended over hard red necks, and shaded ears on the sunny side from the painful process of being slowly skinned. But as one man remarked : ' Blimy, if they can ply all dy in the 'eat, sure-ly we can sit and look at 'em ! '

In the midst of this jam of humanity sat Delaval ; the inherited love of cricket was in his blood, with love of the sea and other especially English instincts. In the days of his prosperity he had known Lord's together with Brooklands, Hendon, Epsom, Hurlingham and Ranelagh, but he felt as if he had never really known the spirit of cricket until he sat in the cheap seats among the crowd, and realised how much these men knew as to the number of runs made this season and the form of every member of both teams.

While a sing-song refrain of ' Chynge the bowlin ' was wafted about him, his thoughts ran back to that contrasted scene around him two months back. In place of the tar and asphalt and perspiration, with the great maroon gasometer opposite, he saw suddenly crooked cobbled passages running past neat little back-yards to a section of a silver blue sea. He saw tortoiseshell cats curled up by huge water-butts, overshadowed by towering hydrangeas. The contrast could not be greater ; yet he had a spirit also for reality among his fellow-men, and the abject poverty of the last few years, which had compelled him to take his recreation of the cheapest sort, had taught him much. The sixpence he had paid for his seat to-day meant forgoing some food he could have eaten with good will. The iced gingerbeer handed round as refreshment was not for him ; even the pink and green editions of the evening papers, so lavishly crumpled up and flung aside, were not for him.

Surrey in. Three hundred up. A roar of applause.

' By Jove, I wish I had 'em in shillings ! ' said one.

' Fifteen pounds,' said another.

' How ever did you do it so quick in your head ? '

' I always was a mathematical maniac.'

So the chaff went on, amid the munching of lemon tablets which

were sold done up in white packets, carried round in a shiny black leather bag by a merry vendor, who was a wag in his way.

The narrowness of Bede's exchequer kept him within rigid lines. He had early changed into rooms where he paid only for bed and breakfast, the latter being represented by a dingy egg. Thus he was free to starve himself when items in his wardrobe needed replenishment. By this time he knew to a nicety how many dinners went to a pair of boots, and how many of his very sketchy lunches matched a couple of new collars.

He sent a pound a week regularly to that address in Oxford which symbolised for him corporeal degradation. Carrie got along very well with her friend the greengroceress as a rule. In her own way she was forbearing, and though she had written to tell him she intended to take a holiday, she had not asked him for extra money. He suspected she had a private store unknown to him ; nevertheless he had sent her ten shillings only yesterday.

He had her letter in his pocket now. It was written in faint scrawling pencil on the cheapest kind of letter-pad paper, the kind scored with impossible lines :

'DEAR BEDE,—We are going to take our holiday this year at Peacehaven, Bessie has friends there who have rooms to let, and will let us have them good and cheap, at least that's the saying, they may not be good enough for yours truly, not that is if there is not a good table which has you know I am always partial too. We are going on Wednesday next so as to keep clear of that lot that gets loose on Monday Bank holiday whose manners of which is not always to my taste. I was always quiet inclined but I am partial to the sea has she is. I will let you have our address at Peacehaven when we have been took in, the people's name is Haddiman so Bessie says.

'Your affectionate wife

'CARRIE.'

(To be continued.)

FRANCE IN THE JEBEL DRUSE.

A FORTNIGHT'S TRAVEL NOTES.

BY THARAYA.

THE Jebel Druse lies a little south-east of Damascus and forms the south-eastern corner of the mandate of Syria. Its centre is a cluster of volcanic hills with the desert on their eastern edge and the wheat-growing plain of Hauran south and west. All this is inhabited by Druses, who also hold the land round Hermon and are found in lessening numbers in the south Lebanon country.

Lebanon is chiefly Christian and lies north-west of Jebel Druse behind the Hermon range. Damascus and the Moslem lands of Syria lie north. Palestine and Transjordan form the southern and south-western borders.

I came to the Jebel after staying for some time in Lebanon and Damascus, the former the stronghold of French influence in Syria, the latter of Mohammedan nationalism. A few words on both are necessary as far as they have a bearing on the condition of the country at present.

In Christian Lebanon, what strikes a Westerner most forcibly is the general absence of all those ingredients useful to the formation of a nation. There is little or no national consciousness. The economic life consists of emigration to such an extent that an enormous proportion of the inhabitants live by the help of foreign remittances, chiefly from America. Among the various Christian sects there is no unity, either in politics or anything else except language, and even this bond is not so general but that, as I am told, the different faiths may be distinguished by the accent of their everyday speech, though they live within a few doorsteps of each other.

With neither religion nor national feeling nor an economic life to bind them, and placed between Islam and the sea, Lebanon has been, and is, forced to look to foreign Christian Powers.

France has made it her centre of influence, from the time of the Crusades if we believe her more enthusiastic apologists; at any rate from long before 1860.

This year brought a crisis. Churchill's book on Maronites

and Druses gives a very vivid picture of its disorders. He maintains that the French consul of the time in Beirut was partly responsible for what followed by openly favouring and promising protection to the Maronite bishops. These, relying on their own feudal leaders—who failed them—and on the French support which eventually rescued them, became so aggressive as to provoke the Druse to open war. Whoever began the trouble, the Christians paid the price. In the massacres of that year the gutters literally ran with their blood. In Lebanon, Christian and Druse are inextricably intermingled, living either in the same or in closely neighbouring villages. During the rebellion two years ago the Christians feared a repetition of 1860. It was unsafe for Europeans, even in this civilised part of the country, to travel along the mountain roads; a bullet might reach them before the necessary explanations could be made. Now there is peace. But it is a land where memory is long and unforgiving, and there is little intercourse between the two faiths, and of course no co-operation.

Politically, the most important result of all this history has been to identify France with the Christian party in Syria, or rather with its Maronite division, for there is now a strong Greek Orthodox party opposed to the mandatory power.

The French have had to govern through a small native upper and middle class more or less educated on Western ideas. It has no real root in the land, even among the simple country people of its own faith. So long as the mandate was chiefly over Christian territory, the merits and defects of government were, however, matters of administration and policy rather than of principle. No essential traditions were being interfered with.

When France became mistress of an Islamic majority, the whole problem was altered. The Christians at present amount to less than one-quarter of the total population of the mandate; the Maronites to about one-eighth. France finds that she is being supported only by one portion of a minority.

The majority, though still lamentably divided among parties, find their natural focus in Damascus and the east and centre of the country, and it is there that the heart of Syria still beats, though half suffocated under the debris and ruins of war.

The real interest of the problem, however, goes beyond the frontiers of Syria, and includes all the mandatory states of the Near East.

Here a drama is working itself out of such absorbing interest

that I gradually came to see it as the background of all that is developing in the country.

I did not feel myself qualified to bring a finished judgment to bear on it. I was travelling as a mere onlooker, provided with that only asset of ignorance, an open mind. My object was language, my lack of other Eastern knowledge extreme. I came with a slender stock of classical Arabic which I wished to improve, the idea being, in Trader Horn's excellent words, that 'the stuff of real life can always beat the grammar books for common sense.'

I suffered under another disqualification. The drama lies, to put it roughly, in the contrast between two opposite philosophies of government, Saxon and Latin, and the former of these I have not seen actually at work. A conclusive opinion requires further voyages to the enchanted lands, and much more study. Meanwhile it is useful to define the scope of the whole, so that my observations, which are nothing but the result of a fortnight's travel in rather unusual circumstances, and cover only a very small portion of the scene, may yet fall into their proper perspective.

I have called it a drama because it is a conflict of two forces the success of either of which spells failure to the other.

Lawrence saw the implication when he wrote of the British policy in Iraq: '... its success would involve the people of Syria in a similar experiment.' That the French are aware of it, and are also nervous as to the result, is abundantly clear from the anti-British violence of their writings on the subject.

The two Powers begin together under more or less equal circumstances, faced with difficulties which, if not similar, are at any rate equivalent. The boards stretch across paths of empire from Nile to Euphrates. The end is the future of the Near East.

The antagonism is one of ideas. It is therefore very deep.

It is a conflict of philosophies: authority and the rigid code against compromise and a permitted field of growth, the ordered Latin instinct against the Saxon, the old as against the new imperialism, if the latter can have such a name at all except as being, take it all in all, the policy of the modern British Empire.

The Anglo-Saxon idea of nationality is one of slow inevitable growth, like that of trees (shall we say ?) from roots many centuries deep, whose first obscure convolutions determine the later fruit and foliage. Whatever superfluous branches governments may lop away; whatever variations may be caused by circumstance, climate or environment, the fundamental racial work is done by

fibres that run right through the living creature from its first emergence into time.

‘ My vegetable love shall grow
Vaster than Empires and more slow.’

The art of government is to recognise the living principle, clear the ground round it, provide or at any rate allow nourishment and the light of day, and let it develop.

I think no fair-minded observer can deny that the French in Syria are trying to strangle this living principle and to overlay it with a gallicised civilisation that has no root in the country at all and must be applied forcibly everywhere except along the western border.

If one were to judge by recent official declarations, this is no longer so. Governors have succeeded one another like waves on a beach, each with his splutter of froth and foam; or like those knights who in sight of all the world set out to climb the Hill of Glass. There have been seven of them in eight years. They have all agreed in saying that the government rested, or was about to rest, or that it was desirable that it should rest, on a basis of popular consent. It remains a fact, however, that the gate to official honour is closed to all except Western influences. The Oriental camel has to make itself particularly small if it wishes to creep through. Favour is no longer for the Christian nominally. But the position is practically unaltered, since the thread of energy which may be able to produce a nation runs chiefly through the east of Syria, and is Mohammedan in spite of variations and traditional heresies, from the Druse schism in the south to the religious eccentricities of the Turkish boundary. It is this thread of national energy which the French are most anxious to discourage.

I came to these conclusions gradually, after a number of small incidents and observations. One was particularly vivid. It was on a sunny day among the ruined houses of Damascus, with the wind blowing the dust of their heaped brick and mortar about one's ears in the desolate space which now stretches between the two long bazaars. An Algerian regiment was passing—red fezzes and bugles. I stood with the rest of Damascus to watch them. But it came into my head to turn round and look at the onlookers. And suddenly in that golden city, where in all my wandering I have never met a discourteous word, I saw rebellion written as plainly as if it had been shrieked aloud. It was near that end of

the long bazaar where the Bedouin buy their yellow shoes; and there was a varied crowd, from pale-eyed shopmen in narrow shouldered gowns to the rust-coloured cloaks of the desert. It was startling to see the same sullen look at once upon so many different faces, and watch the noisy bargaining people move away with scarcely a word spoken.

And there were other days, bringing here and there bits of evidence, though never again so graphic, and all appearing as it were by surprise through the peaceful order of the city.

Everywhere, too, evidence still remained of the rebellion. In the villages of the oasis—the Ghuta—the yellow mud walls of lanes and yards are spattered with bullet holes; the villages themselves half ruined. We used to hunt for quails in the long stretches of green wheat, between sunken water dykes where the tortoises lie in the sun, and would come upon unexploded shells, four or five in a morning, carefully propped by the ditch side. In the city suburbs the glass has not yet been put back into the window-panes. The barbed wire runs right into the town. And I have sat in a garden on the banks of one of the Seven Rivers and noticed, through apricots in blossom, the ugly wire entanglements standing among the flowering beans.

In all this time my dealings were almost entirely with native Syrians, and I felt it was not fair to judge any government out of the mouths of its enemies. Fortune took the matter in hand, almost accidentally, as she does these things. A friend to be entertained, a spare fortnight for holidays, a Druse guide and three donkeys waiting for employment, and some vague talk at a lunch party of the ancient stone cities of Bashan—with these strings she led us into the guarded country, and allowed us to watch the people in authority putting into practice those theories which my Syrian friends had been describing . . . from rather a different angle.

We knew very little of what to expect.

Our hopes were rather for picturesque dangers, like Gertrude Bell's expedition over the same country twenty years before. But disappointment on this head began even before we started. Someone said, 'Why not go by train?' And then an enterprising chauffeur suggested a car across the Leja, where Mr. Porter had been so interestingly disturbed by bandits fifty years ago. We felt the prison walls, but decided simply to pretend they were not there and stick to our donkeys. And these little beasts, by the

mere virtue of unobtrusiveness, trotted safely under the noses of all police who look for cars at cross roads, and brought us unnoticed into the heart of Jebel Druse.

We went by the south road straight out of Damascus, through olive groves, and Hermon on our right, his last snow melting like an ethereal patchwork in the sky. Damascus sky is always pale, as if too full of light. Her hot red hills shoot into it like flames. We left them behind us. We ambled among horses, cows, donkeys, long strings of camels, country people striding or loitering. In the distance hung a sleepy sound of practising artillery, where Katana lies among trees. And flocks of sheep moved slowly in their own dust behind the shepherd. He in his Bedouin draperies can never guess what Christian meaning the ancient picture holds.

Four armoured cars came racing along the burnt grass by the roadside, and mounted native policemen, patrolling in pairs. The army, like other departments, is none too anxious to adopt stray jobs. They gave us curious looks and passed. Donkeys were not yet sufficiently suspect to rouse official activity.

After the cultivated land there is a long stony tract, and then one reaches Kiswe in green fields. Here a green water flows without apparent motion and nourishes poplar trees on either bank: you can trace them winding far away and know where the river lies invisible in the lap of desert hills. This is said to be Pharpar, 'better than all the waters of Israel.'

We turned from the last river of Damascus. We gave a whack to the rope and uttered resounding 'Hahs!' to our unreceptive animals. They stepped with delicate hesitation off the metalled road into a sandy track and crossed, without even knowing it, the boundary of the modern world.

That night we slept among the Druses in a small village under a hill of loose stones called the Castle of Brass.

I do not mean to give the adventures of each day's travelling. Who can recapture that freshness? Like the two in the fairy tale who could spread their handkerchief and, stepping into it, find themselves in their kingdom of dreams, we, travelling beside the known world, lived in the unknown.

It is a hard country, created long ago by dead volcanoes whose lavas lie scattered in stretches of stones, black, or red, or grey. In a good year it grows wheat or barley; but there had been little rain this winter, and we found it difficult even to distinguish the ploughed land from the desert, except by some poor stalks which had pushed

their way among the shale and the yellow thistles and then withered. Nearer the villages, the people were out pulling up their dead harvests by the root for straw, men and women squatting on their heels, tearing the stunted ears not with sickles but with their hands. One, standing idle in the field, would sing to them a high monotonous song whose cadence kept them working.

We spent three days going through these waste treeless lands, along the Wadi Liwa east of Leja, and then westward again along its southern border.

The villages entertained us kindly. They have often been described. Their blind outline is dotted all round the edge of Leja—the sheet of lava which lifts itself in a grey bank about 30 feet out of the plain. The villages are cut out of the same lava rock. They are black and almost absolutely treeless. In the distance they look like fortresses; but when you come near you see them to be heaps of ruins, a chaos of mortarless stones where a few households live, surrounded by the crumbled houses of other generations. The work of dilapidation which Gertrude Bell mentions has been going on continuously: temples and columns reported by earlier travellers have vanished or are vanishing. But the old Roman tanks still keep a meagre life in what were flourishing parishes seventeen centuries ago. They are wide sheets of water laid below the surface of the ground with great basalt blocks without mortar, each one in the plain below its own village. Here, also, are the crops. The plateau itself is cultivated only at the centre. Its outer landscape is barren as the moon, so ravaged and distorted that only a practised eye can tell what has once been the habitation of men.

There is no beauty in this landscape except the gentleness of dawn or sunset, which throws over it a helpless kind of loveliness unable to reach into the heart of the black stones—

‘ Their gaunt ramparts still reject
The supplience of those mellow fires.’

In the heat of the day the very ground seemed to swim and melt, and a fiery wind would come breathing up at us. Then we made for the nearest village and were ever received with free courtesy. We would either leave it to chance, or Najm—our ‘Star’—would inquire beforehand for the most comfortable house. Wherever we went the mattresses would be spread and the cushions piled up for us; the embers hastily placed on the sunken hearth in the middle of the guest-room floor; and the master of the house

would seat himself there and set about the roasting of coffee, with his household wealth of beaked brass coffee-pots before him.

Bliss, to slip off one's shoes and rest in a shadowed room !

How many faces we remember, stooping over those heavenly berries for the ancient hospitable rite ! Old sheiks with pointed beard and close white turban neatly wound : keen men, their eyes see none the less for being pencilled with kohl. Or the dashing son of the house whose Bedouin profile is dark under white draperies ; the long plaits of his hair fall down on either side as he bends over the flame. Or Abu Farid, our charming peasant host, who looked so like a robber with his black camel-hair fillet askew and long unshaven chin, and was in truth the kindest of friends.

They are a strong people, big boned, well made, with intelligent brows. Fighter and farmer mingled, one learns to recognise the type.

Their manners in their own houses are very gracious, naturally well bred and dignified, with not quite the statuesque gravity of the Bedouin. They treated us, two wandering female enigmas, with unfailing respect and kindness. The only approach to impertinence we ever had to snub came once from a little worm of a schoolmaster, and a second time from a parish secretary. Both these had enjoyed a Frankish education.

Their women are tall and beautiful in a large way, like women of the Sagas. They swing their long skirts from long close bodices which give to the figure in its white veil an infinite grace of carriage. Can we forget Nur, aged seventeen, with the chaplet of gold coins in her black hair, and her great shining eyes, half hidden under the veil, as she leaned against her mother's doorpost and bade us welcome ?

There are Christians, too, on the edge of Leja. We found them living for the most part peacefully with the Druses, though both sides tell stories of two years ago, and one village at least we discovered to be divided into unforgiving factions. The Christian women here dress like the Bedouin, with dark blue nun-like swathings and tattooed chins, and they speak a barbarous Arabic difficult to follow.

They all come in to look at us—wild-looking groups, in the light of the open door, watching across the coffee-pots to where we sit on gaudy carpets and cultivate Olympian calm. One does not hurry to speak. Occasionally, at odd intervals, somebody says 'Welcome !' We put our hand to our breast and reply suitably,

'Upon religion the inclination of thy heart!' When the berries send up their little curling smoke, the mortar is brought forward, richly carved out of a hard dark wood called 'batm,' and polished with age. The expert takes it, gives a preliminary roll in his hand to the gigantic pestle, like a pianist striking his preparatory chord, and starts the cheerful coffee music. Anyone who feels able to beat in tune can take a turn. The slightest fault or hesitation in rhythm is detected and criticised. We listen for the best performer and compliment him. They see that we are people of discrimination: these are the refinements of life. We begin to talk of this and that. The coffee, ineffable drink, is poured into two small cups, a sip at the bottom of each, and handed. 'May your hands be blessed!' say we. 'Your hands!' say they. And the cups go round, refilled for every sip, till our turn comes again.

It is the good bitter drink that keeps us alive through these hours of conversation, which go right on into the night without a break.

When it gets dark a lantern is brought, and throws yellow patches on the ochre-washed walls, the water jar near the door, the cross-legged figures, while the black stone rafters hewn by some ancient Syrian under Rome are lost in soot and shadows. In the women's quarters they now begin preparations for supper. We have pleaded delicate health so as to avoid the roast sheep, and can never understand why 'leban' and rice should take so long to cook, especially now that both the desert and the town are amply provided with Primus stoves.

Finally, they carry in a straw mat worked in patterns. The dishes are placed on it. The flat wafer-like bread is handed round to be used as food and plate and spoon, and we scoop our dinner out with it as neatly as we can. Our host is invited, but will not join; he hovers round, waiting on us with a solicitude full of dignity. Other guests, less honoured, sit murmuring in the corners of the room. In the outer shadows the women stand to watch the effect of their cookery. We finish with a decorous despatch; the other guests take our places; then the master with his sons. The women and servants eat last of all. And then the carpet is swept, soap and water are brought for our hands and faces, and the evening begins again with dancing, or more talk over the coffee, or music of reeds or rebeck.

The schoolmasters came to visit us in these places.

Here we met the man mentioned above, stirring strife busily

between the two faiths of his village. His villainous French grated in our ears all day. He asked how two Christian ladies could bear to travel with a Druse guide, and when we finally showed some impatience, we discovered that he was almost as thoroughly disliked by his own people as by the opposing party.

The other two were pathetic. One was born in Lebanon and a Christian; the other had been sent from the Druse country for education with the Jesuits. They were isolated here to spread their half-assimilated knowledge among a people indifferent at best.

Roads and schools! Apart from military and police expenditure, we thought these two must be the most important items in the budget of Jebel Druse. The French officers afterwards told us so. 'They are our hope,' said they. 'In twenty years the Jebel will all speak French.' Meanwhile the young schoolmaster looks with sad eyes when he speaks of his life in the village. His new culture sits uneasily, and it has lost him the traditions of his people. These he is there to combat; and for the present, at any rate, they still live with a vigorous life of their own. 'Les gens n'aiment pas l'instruction,' said he, sitting there with so perplexed a brow, while the village in a circle watched its young men dance the 'Dabki.'

All this time we had been miraculously free from interference.

Our captors later refused to believe it, but as a matter of fact we did not know that the country was under martial law. The idea of reporting to the authorities did not enter our heads. We actually planned to spend a night close by one of the garrison posts, and were led past it by a quite accidental but fortunate detour which may have appeared to smack of premeditation.

We came to speech with the Intelligence service, but it was having other things to think about at the moment. We met it in a motor car, an immaculate, surprising azure vision with only sky and desert and the military road around it, in the middle of an argument with its chauffeur. Where was the road leading to? We, trotting demurely, and as dignified as one can be when sitting on luggage, were hailed with this question in French, not of the drawing-room kind. Najm stood like a stock, understanding nothing, but not admiring the voice; seen from behind, his neck was becoming crimson with surprising vividness considering how rarely he washed. Another impulsive outburst, full of adjectives, from the car. The gentleman was agitated, or he might have remembered that the twenty years in which the Jebel is to learn the

language have hardly yet begun. One of the ladies steered into the arena and offered to interpret. Intelligence suddenly realised that it *was* a lady and not merely a Syrian and became polite and very pink. After a short conversation—drawing-room French this time—the azure vision sped away in dust, and in the joy of his heart Najm lifted up his voice and sang. This was always extremely painful.

In the dusk of our third day we clattered under broken piers of a triumphal arch along an ancient pavement. It was a Roman town, and we were recommended to a house there, and found it on the main street which still spreads its magnificent breadth down the hill. The houses on either hand are shuffled into heaps by earthquakes. Here the police discovered us at last.

The coffee had just been put upon the hearth. We were resting on sheepskin rugs; we were very tired, when two men in khaki came to say that the 'Mustashar' would like to see us.

But we thought nothing of this. We had been lulled into security. Rather surprised at the fuss our hosts made at parting with us, we said we should be back before the meal was cooked, and followed by the light of matches, apparently over the roofs of houses, up and down interminable uneven steps, like the walk of a dream. The last steps brought us on to a terrace where six officers under a lamp were eating their dinner.

We were not prepared to cause a sensation, but our appearance out of the darkness seemed to petrify them. Their forks remained suspended. They forgot even to move. We might have been gorgons!

Rather overpowered, we murmured politely. We had come at once on receiving the amiable invitation. We would not interrupt. We would leave them to their meal. We prepared to retire in good order.

But a young man in white uniform now detached himself, as it were, from the speechless group, which by this time had risen. This was the Mustashar himself.

'It goes without saying, the demoiselles will dine here,' he said, in a voice not nearly as gentle as his words.

We regretted extremely. Our hosts in the town were expecting us. We were staying to-morrow and would do ourselves the pleasure of coming again when we had no engagement.

'It is not possible you should give the *préférence* "à ces gens."'
The voice was so peremptory this time that we could not mistake

its implication. 'You will stay the night with us. You cannot stay in that house.'

What is inevitable had best be accepted kindly, we thought, and admitted the pleasantness of beds and baths. We were sorry to give trouble, and we asked to be allowed a mirror and soap before dinner.

In the few minutes' privacy we reviewed the situation in whispers. The urgent matter was to settle upon the *reason* of our travels, to which so far we had never given a thought. Only the innocent go about unprovided with reasons, but we rightly guessed that the Mustashar was no adept in human nature. We decided to throw the whole burden of responsibility on Thos. Cook & Son and the numerous inaccuracies of their guide-book.

It was an uncomfortable meal.

When we came out again on to the terrace we found Najm waiting there. We had obtained with a little difficulty that he should be sent for, and stood now in silence while he was commanded by the Mustashar to tell our hosts that we were not going back to them. We thought the Mustashar's manner as unfortunate as that of his colleague two days before: the message could not have been given more roughly or with less consideration for the people's feelings.

Najm blinked his eyes and looked mutely to his rightful owners, one of whom finally said, 'You will excuse us and tell the master of the house that the Presence, the Mustashar, keeps us here.' Whereupon we sat down to eat in the glacial atmosphere created by the use of the Arabic words.

It was, as I have said, uncomfortable. It is incredible how many subjects of conversation become difficult when one is suspected of being a spy!

Explanations came first. How had our motor come into the country without being noticed?

It had not, we explained. Our motor consisted of three donkeys.

'Donkeys?' The simultaneous voices were full of eloquence. But then *where* did we come from? There is no respectable place within easy donkey distance of where we sat.

We came from Damascus.

'Damascus?' Another eloquent chorus. But did the demoiselles know how far that was? Ninety kilometres! And where had the demoiselles slept?

In the villages.

This was received with silence even more eloquent. 'We were very well treated,' said the demoiselles.

'These people appear better than they are,' said the Mustashar icily. 'How long have the ladies been in this country?'

'Three days.'

'Incredible! Did they not come upon any police?'

'We saw two motors, and had the pleasure of meeting one of your colleagues.' We described the meeting with some gusto.

Then came the real problem. 'Why did the demoiselles travel on donkeys in Jebel Druse?'

The ladies were prepared for this. Was it not one of the tours suggested by Monsieur Cook in his guide-book? And if the gentlemen would read it, they would see that none of these excellent new roads are even mentioned there—probably because in 1925 they did not exist—so that one supposed a four-footed animal to be the only means of travel.

The gentlemen looked perplexed but hostile. 'Strange, the Agence Cook should send you!'

This monstrous mistake had to be hastily corrected. We explained that nobody had *sent* us. We were travelling for pleasure. But it was a fact that Jebel Druse is described in the guide-book; and they would do well to suggest to Monsieur Cook to bring it more up to date.

The advice was not received with any particular enthusiasm. They contemplated us in silence.

Goaded into mischief, we asked whether tourists often came here.

The Mustashar was emphatic. 'Indeed, mesdemoiselles, you may say you are the first. When your coming was reported, we dismissed it as a quite impossible rumour.'

He was interrupted by a snub-nosed Breton carried away by feeling. 'Some of your compatriots travelled here . . . just before the rebellion,' said he.

This remark dropped into a silence. One cannot bandy innuendoes after seven hours on a wooden saddle.

'Where did we think of going next?' the Mustashar asked.

We did not quite know. We were interested in ruins. (Statement obviously not believed.) We thought of crossing the Jebel by Kanawat to Salhad. Perhaps the gentlemen themselves could tell us of interesting places?

'You shall be given a suitable itinerary,' the Mustashar assured us.

And that was all, that night.

The Mustashar was really not so bad, and we were sorry for his difficulty. In the watches of the night he evidently came to the conclusion that one of us—who spoke no Arabic—was innocent; that both, as he afterwards wrote to his colleague, were 'ladies erudite and distinguished,' and must be made happy while being kept, if possible, out of mischief and under observation.

For the next two days he dedicated himself to our amusement. And although we found that the Druses, instead of friendly intercourse now offered us only black looks or the most flowery official politeness, we were very much interested to see the French at work and listen to their own ideas from their own lips.

The Mustashar's authority seemed to be practically absolute in his own district. He is detached from the Intelligence branch of the army, and has an independent jurisdiction superior to that of the commandants of the local garrisons. He is responsible for whatever goes on in his territory, and is, in fact, the representative of government there. This particular man's district, he told us, covered an extent of fifty miles.

He was genuinely interested in it. Roads and schools, hospital, water supply, afforestation: the amount of work done and planned out we could not but admire. In the near future there are to be hotels and villas: he hoped soon to see the country completely opened up.

As we rode about with him, six armed guards galloping round us, and saw the Jebel of the future blossoming as a Western garden (a rather suburban garden), we could not withhold some sympathy from our host. He had a theory, though to us it seemed 'works without grace,' 'of the nature of sin.'

France was civilisation, and civilisation was good. The Druses, and the Syrians also for that matter, were barbarians who cannot understand it. But if it is forced upon them for a while they will come to understand it, and accept it gratefully in time. A strong regime is necessary while they are becoming accustomed to what they themselves will wish for when once they are sufficiently educated to judge. They will then be happy to find themselves under French rule.

I think this represents the reasoning of the few thoughtful men we met out there.

The trouble with France in her foreign dominions is that her best men do not often go. The average we found had no idea beyond that of making the country useful if possible to France herself, and of getting away from it as quickly as they could.

Both agreed in upholding the necessity of order, and of severity as a means of order. We did not meet a Frenchman to whom the comparative freedom across the border was not distasteful; rather naturally, since it often takes the form of Bedouin raids from Trans-jordan and gives trouble and a good many casualties to the police. Three of their men and twelve Bedouin were killed a four hours' ride from Salhad the day that we were there, and we were often assured that we should not find the 'good order' of Syria across the frontier.

We were always triumphantly referred to the peace and security which allowed us to travel without danger through a country hitherto so lawless. The fact of our being English had certainly added to the cordiality, if not to the peace and security. This we did not mention, however, and could freely bear witness to the *pax Gallica*.

There seems no reason to doubt its continuance. Troops are there in force and the people unarmed. If the regime can last for some time, and succeeds in educating a 'French' population in its schools, it may become permanent; the old independent social structure will at any rate be destroyed. Whether what takes its place will have any principle of life in it is more doubtful.

The system, at all events, is that of an 'imperium' and not of a mandate. There is no 'educating the people to govern themselves' for the present nor did we find any trace of such an idea among the Frenchmen there.

As conquerors they seem reasonably able to hope for success provided that it be worth their while to continue the expenditure which so 'tidy' a government demands. This condition struck a doubtful note even in the optimistic spirit of our Mustashar. Before the rebellion the proportion between the military and civil budgets was already severe, more than three to one; and unless the 'gallicising' becomes *very* much more advanced than it now is, the country cannot possibly give a revenue to balance even the policing of it.

As to its economics at present, we noticed two things.

First, that we saw no evidence of a single *private* enterprise in

the whole country we travelled over, and we covered a good deal of the ground. All that was done at all was done by government. I have been told the same thing of most of Syria, but in the Jebel Druse we verified it as a fact, and it gave an extraordinary sense of lifelessness to the land.

Secondly, we found that among all our Mustashar's numerous plans there was not one calculated to help or develop the agriculture of his district, with the exception of a little afforestation. Roads and schools are instruments of policy. Water conduits, new shops and streets and houses, prospective hotels, all benefit the towns. The peasants were not considered at all. The year's miserable harvest seemed a matter of indifference, and since the roads and water reservoir were being made by forced labour, there was no relief and very little paid employment to tide over the bad season; no scheme that we could hear of for improving cultivation generally. The land itself is good except on Leja and along the desert fringe: where there is a rainfall or other water it grows the best wheat in Syria. If the Jebel is ever to maintain itself at all it must do so by agriculture. We wondered if this short-sighted neglect came from the government, or whether it was peculiar to our Mustashar, who probably does not know a potato from a beetroot until he sees them cooked. In any case it made one understand the remark of a charming civilian at Salhad who confided to us that he hoped the military would go soon, 'so that we may begin to govern.'

In one criticism we found ourselves to agree with many of the French officials themselves. This was in deploring the shortness of their terms of service.

The defect seems logically implied in their centralising policy. A country which is to be given a *foreign* civilisation needs administrators less familiar with its own customs and ideas than with the intentions and policies of the civilisation to be applied. On the other hand, when the government is to be built up out of the institutions actually inherent in the people governed, a long and conscientious familiarity becomes necessary in the administrators, and long terms of service are essential.

The logic of it, however, works thoroughly badly in practice. Our Mustashar had only been a few months in the district and was going to leave it before the year was out. I do not know if he was popular. His manners to the natives seemed to us insufferably arrogant and bad, and we suspect that the pomp and circumstance with which he went about were not as impressive to them as he

imagined. But he was conscientious, dealt out honest justice, was accessible to all who wanted him, and was beginning to know the people of his district personally. He had no interest in them as human beings; they were barbarians and 'bandits' who liked to shoot French soldiers when they could, and, as he said, need not be treated as honourable enemies since they are rebels. He was hoping to see their blood-enemies, the Circassians, established as local police, because their own men, who are employed at present, are too lenient. But he was interested in his territory as in an estate to be developed, and would be sorry to leave the work when scarcely begun.

From the point of view of the people, the frequent changes do nothing but harm. Anyone who has lived in an agricultural district knows how slow the farmer is in forming opinions or attachments, how tenacious when once formed. An oppressive ruler is resented at once because the effect of his rule is immediately painful. But a good man usually takes a long time to be appreciated. The Druses' feelings for government are very personal. They cannot be expected to grow fond of an abstract idea which is also contrary to all their traditions, and of which the visible embodiments come and go like a kaleidoscope. But they *might* become personally attached to the man who lives among them. This possibility, however, all our French informants denied, and we did not find a single man to say a good word for the people he was governing.

After three days we escaped. Our warders did not quite know what to do about it. We had been entirely frank with them, not having in fact anything to hide. We told them our proposed route; diplomatically asked for introductions to (suitable) Druses; at the same time steadily refused to exchange our donkeys for government cars or anything that could be escorted. We rather wickedly offered our least disreputable animal to the Mustashar himself if he would come with us. French prestige, however, could not be seen on a donkey, as we knew, and there was really no reason to detain us. Beyond the fact of speaking Arabic, there was nothing absolutely damning about us. And as we were in the very middle of the country, it did not make much difference which way we went out of it.

And so we departed.

We thanked our friend the Mustashar. We also told him that we had never before been taken for 'agents politiques' and had found it delightfully amusing, and left him nonplussed by the

mention of such unmentionable things. Perhaps he thought he was not being taken quite as seriously as usual.

The road was very joyous after our spell of captivity.

No policemen springing like obsequious shadows from the doorstep whenever we came out ! No amateur Sherlocks asking clumsy questions ! No sitting behind a partition so thin that even our whispers could be heard !

We had scarcely seen Najm all this time, and he had been more harassed than we by official and non-official questions. He now went ahead, carolling with incredible shrillness, his moustache curled like the Kaiser's, his short legs horizontal on the bundles either side of him, with absurd yellow boots pointing skyward. Even the donkeys seemed in holiday mood and trotted.

And we were on hills now, skirting along the edge of the plain, with Leja like a grey blot below us, and far blue ridges of Damascus hills behind it. Like a dream it lay, the country of our wandering.

There was a breeze. We were going towards a land of vines and fruit, with rolling wheat below. Trees too. The stunted oaks of Bashan, grateful after treeless wayfaring. Pomegranates and figs and walnuts as we reached the higher ground.

The people were friendly again with the simple friendliness offered to the traveller. We were glad to have done with interpreters and all the flowery speeches.

Late in the afternoon we saw Kanawat on the hill. Its temple columns show from far away, on a green slope. Here we spent two days at the house of Sheikh Achmed el Hajari, who is high priest and spiritual head of the Druses.

He entertained us with aristocratic courtesy and the circum-spection of the man of the world. The little town, however, took us openly to its heart, rejoicing that we were the first foreigners to stay there unaccompanied. Najm must have told tales, for there was great amusement. Henceforward, indeed, our one difficulty was to avoid politics. They were ready to pour them into our ears : legends of the past war ; surmises—interrogative—for the future. We thought it inflammable stuff best avoided.

'The water of this land has madness in it,' said one young barbarian as he led us among ancient tumuli that strew a valley head. 'Every ten years we have a war.' He spoke dispassionately. 'The birds (aeroplanes) are the most troublesome. We had to live for many months among the stones where they could not see us.' With a wave of his hand he pointed out these natural advantages.

The country is indeed strewn with granite boulders like a graveyard. 'We left the women in the village and barricaded the roads against tanks. They had lots of tanks. The best way,' he added with a charming smile, as if it were a domestic recipe, 'is to fire at the petrol box. When that is on fire, one can wait in a circle and shoot as they crawl out.'

'I have many wounds,' he said. 'Would you like to see?' He pulled up his sleeves and his long striped gown, and showed arms and legs spattered with bullet scars. 'And many more!' patting his body after a moment's contemplation. 'My brothers and cousins were all killed,' he concluded, in the tone that a good amateur might use of the genuine experts.

We sat on a heap of stones in the shade and shared biscuits and oranges.

He dived into his waistband and pulled out a rag in which he kept a small treasury of beads and scarabs found as he ploughed among the ancient graves. He had found them by chance. 'I do not open the graves like some people,' he said. 'That is wrong. Is it not?' He looked at us inquiringly. He was a huge creature, as clumsy as a lion cub. We said that we ourselves were not of those who open graves.

He chose a white agate very carefully and offered it, telling us prettily that he would like us to accept even were it precious as diamonds.

Then he pulled out a scrap of paper. 'Would you like to see this?' said he. 'It shows you what the French took from me.' It was a receipt for one rifle and a revolver. 'They were mine. I got them by killing a French soldier. And now,' he continued, after a pause which we spent in considering the code of ethics, 'we are disarmed, and when the Bedouin come to take our sheep we have no means of driving them away.'

We lunched with this young man, and discovered later on that he was parish clerk to his village and kept a municipal notebook with neat Arabic accounts. We could not help feeling that the victory of the pen was rather a temporary affair in this case.

They played their war songs to us—wild notes for the reeds of Theocritus! While we sat listening, Najm's little gun used to appear, seemingly from among our underwear, and be handed round as preciously as a first-born baby. There was always a group bending over it in some corner of the room. 'Bandits!' We thought of the Mustashar! But they are more than that. Poets

also, of a Homeric age. And it is no easy matter to rule a people whose poetry is war.

The images of war grew extraordinarily vivid as we travelled. The French had been blockaded in Suweida for five months and the relieving forces attacked and slaughtered in the plain. The sites were pointed out as we went along, and stories told, the relative numbers engaged being chosen, we could not help suspecting, less for accuracy than for effect. We did, however, gather that, man for man, the Druse genuinely considers himself the better fighter of the two. At the beginning of it all a column of 3000 French had been surprised and practically annihilated, and their plunder provided the Druses with weapons to carry on the campaign.

As for the rumour prevalent in Lebanon and among many of the French that the British furnished arms and ammunition, we never heard it mentioned in the Jebel. We did hear of a British colonel who stood on Suweida hill to snapshot the battle while three Druse columns converged for the attack, but never discovered the origin of this picturesque legend!

Two pleasant days we spent with one of the exiled chiefs recently pardoned and now encamped, Bedouin-wise, beside his ruined village. We had a letter to these people, and were charmingly welcomed, and glad to live in the freedom of the 'houses of hair,' their goat-wool tents.

They were sowing their fields with maize. From the hills at the back the ground sloped gently into the wind-coloured plain.

Their big house in the middle of the village was a mere skeleton. They complained that their enemies had taken the trouble to blow it up with dynamite instead of merely shelling it. This treatment, they said, had been reserved for the houses of their clan only—which is an illustrious one in the Jebel—and they considered it dishonourable warfare—an example of frightfulness, in fact. That, and the cutting down of trees (which both sides seem to have indulged in).

We lived like the patriarchs—flocks, children and servants around us—and have never been made to feel more kindly at home than in that five-roomed tent.

Our host was a clever, reasonable man, and knew a good deal of European and Eastern affairs. We sat over the coffee-cups, a lantern on the ground, and starlight closing in the open side of the tent as with a curtain. Our host, in a long yellow cloak—'good for catching bullets,' he said, smiling as he showed us the rents—held

his three grandchildren round him ; on the quilts beside us his wife and handsome sister sat with their veils loose in the pleasant night air and told us of mirrors and rugs and china, and all the things dear to the heart of women the world over, lost in the crash of their fortunes. ' Would they build again ? ' we asked. We were told no. A tent was ' easier to move.' We talked of the present and the future.

It so happened that a lady journalist from Paris was making the tour of Syria and was to be motored into the Jebel as far as Suweida to interview Druse notables next morning. Our friend was to go. ' They will all tell her lies,' said he, ' and she will write that we are happy here. But my opinions are known, and I shall tell her the truth. We want a constitution of our own. We have always had it. Even under the Turks we have never been governed except by our own people. This I shall tell her.'

' We shall get our own government in the end,' he continued. ' But there is nothing to be done just now.'

We suggested that it was a time for peaceful methods. Revolts could only play into the hands of their enemies. If they were united in wanting their own constitution, and persevering about it, it was bound to come to them in the long run. After all, the government was pledged as a mandatory under the League of Nations.

Our host agreed, but smiled. ' The League of Nations is a long way away,' he said. ' And it is not we who write the newspapers. But we shall succeed in the end. The Druse does not change. And we know how to keep in touch with each other under any government. And we know how to wait. The English do not help us, but they allow their nations some freedom, and all that surrounds us is on our side.' He waved his hand eastward into the night.

We heard later from the French that the lady journalist's interview had been a great success and had much impressed the notables, but what exactly was said we never learnt.

Salhad was the most eastern point of our journey. We came down upon it from the hills, and found the little town as busy as a swarm of bees, with all the bustle of an active garrison. It seemed literally to swarm with coloured troops under the round mass of its Saracen castle.

Here we stayed at the house of a ' loyal ' Druse, the only one we came across whose sentiments seemed perfectly genuine. We were most charmingly entertained too by the Mustashar and his

interpreter, and found them to be shining exceptions both in their attitude towards us as Anglo-Saxons and in their manners with the natives. It was here that we felt most strongly how far better a chance the French mandatory system, bad as it is, would have, if only they would send more gentlemen to apply it.

In the late afternoon we got permission to climb to the old fortress, which covers the top of an isolated hill. The smooth sloping walls of the outer rampart are still in fair repair, though the inside has all crumbled. It is a great pile, armed to the teeth; the guns, with ammunition stacked ready in dugouts beside them, point their thin muzzles over the empty distance; and the ruined subterranean labyrinth of rooms holds men as thick as bats in a deserted church. Three sentries, we were told, can guard this place, it stands so sheer. Under it the little flat-roofed town, the barracks, and barbed enclosure where eighty Druse prisoners are kept in tents, are safe against invasion.

It was sunset. The plain shone illuminated, like a sea with red waves, into which the fortress thrust a monstrous hill of shadow. Its summit touched the straight road that runs to the eastern deserts. Our eyes followed it; our thoughts also. What magic like that of the road that dips to an unknown horizon?

We thought of the guardians of these marches. Og, king of Bashan, is said to have reigned in Salhad. The Romans built the road. On an old house in Bosra is a stone where the third Legion carved its name: 'the Gallic Legion,' the Frenchman said as we passed it. Its sentries, too, perhaps looked out as these were doing into the veils of evening. Roman or Turk, Frenchman or Arab, in all centuries the desert border is the same.

'The desert is nearer than you think.' Who had said these words? A few days before, as we rode along, a horseman had galloped past, and wheeled when Najm hailed him. His kerchief was swathed like a helmet to cover forehead and chin. There was surely some Crusader's blood in the blue of those eyes and the high-bridged nose and bristling red moustache. What Najm said to him we did not hear, but he came up to us smiling, and spoke the good Arabic of the desert. He lived in the east with Ibn Saud's men. He had come the day before and was returning. 'A short visit,' said we. 'Is it not a long way?' 'It was *business*.' He looked at us a moment with the keen eyes and smiled again. 'The desert is nearer than you think.' It was he who had said it, and left us, galloping.

We thought of the words now. Was the desert not very near indeed? Nearer than France, who builds so regardless of that terrific background?

For centuries the Mediterranean separated East and West. Now that is over. The line of union or division runs across the sand. The problem must be solved by every Power that touches those perilous regions.

Will the French logic solve it? Logic, alas! must be logical or cease to be. Will it tame the desert? Or will it bend? Or will it break?

We were standing at the top of the fortress on a little platform made for a 75 gun that moved on a swivel. The evening was rising towards us in purple and gold. A young lad from the north of France strolled up. It was his gun. 'A good "machin,"' said he. He put his hand on its long smooth throat with an indescribable movement of tenderness. A woman might have envied that caress.

We looked with a sort of fear on all the instruments of war around us. Men and engines, were they not embodiments, incalculable forces, creations of the idea that brought them hither? And that idea in its turn, what half-forgotten influences in the centuries had brought it down to us?

Those others, our friends in the Jebel, sit in their low black houses remembering the legends of their war. They also have an idea. And such a one, if they hold it truly, as has often defeated the logics of this world.

We thought of the old story. How Aladdin one day, all unwitting, held the Magic Lamp in his hands, and, rubbing it carelessly, found the ready slave before him.

Are we not all slaves of the Lamp? It is the mysterious consciousness of our race, the thing that—binding us together—separates us from other men. Handle the shining object—nay, touch it ever so lightly—we spring up, bound to obey, to live or die for it, tied to it for ever by the infinite secrets that have gone to our making. We differ only from the Arabian Djinn in that we rarely know how deep is the servitude.

Who, when he thinks of it, would not tremble to be among the Guardians of the Lamp?

LADY NELSON : A MINIATURE.

THERE is a miniature of her painted about the time of the Nile. It is a placid, almost bovine, countenance, full and rounded, verging to plumpness, and with no particular expression. And yet if you cover the lower half, the eyes are found to be beautiful. They are large and dark and sensitive, and seem to deepen prophetically with the shadow of later suffering. But for the rest it is the portrait of an essentially ordinary woman ; sensible, kindly enough, setting due store by her position and the good opinion of the world, and no more selfish than its ways necessitate. With the large white mob cap of stiff printed lace, crowning a heavy black coiffure, the kerchief spread majestically over the ample bust, the voluminous sleeves, and single large signet ring conspicuous on the complacently folded hands, she has the air of a woman who has chosen well in marriage, and likes to give the impression that she knows it.

It was her second marriage. Her first husband, Doctor Nisbet, had died within eighteen months of the other, and she had returned with her son to live with an uncle, Mr. Herbert, a rich man, and President of the Council in the Island of Nevis.

They were important people in that little West Indian station. Granted, there was not much competition : a few planters and merchants and shipping folk ; a lawyer or so, and a company of Foot ; their wives and daughters ; and the officers from the visiting ships of war. Not a very exciting life, but pleasant enough for the women, who were always in a minority, and consoled themselves, with the carefreeness which this position gave them, for being lost to the greater brilliance and variety of Bath.

The Navy—though seldom represented by more than a single ship—was an essential element of Nevis Society, and in a feminine view the one that could least be spared. It was gallant, it was picturesque, it was mildly exotic, and it was an intellectual link with the outer world. It did not matter that it was always a different ship—one lot of officers was much the same as another. The fluidity of the element did not affect its nature ; rather it was

part of its charm, and like the ever-changing changelessness of the sea itself, explained why one never got tired of it.

But Captain Nelson was different from the usual run of officers. He would not drink, he would not flirt, he was awkward in the President's drawing room, and he would not even talk scandal. At the healths of Royalty and the British Admiral he gloomily filled his glass, and, emerging for the first time from his silence remarked that these were always his 'bumper toasts.' Miss Herbert thought it too odd. One would almost take the man for a boor, if it were not for the strong impression he gave of being something rather out of the way. She could make nothing of him, but she was intrigued and delighted, and wrote to her cousin, who was away on a visit, to come back at once and solve the enigma. How pleasant it is for one attractive woman to be invited by another—and one who could be a rival—to use her feminine charms to probe a masculine mystery. No wonder Mrs. Nisbet hurried back home, wondering what this new and strange animal would be like. A post-captain, young, and reputed over-conscientious in enforcing the Navigation Act, which annoyed the colonials and embarrassed his seniors. That he was unpopular with the merchants was a recommendation—she disliked them; and to be reserved in society was no disadvantage—rather the opposite. The mark of a superior mind—or shyness. Probably the latter, since her cousin had insinuated that he needed 'bringing out.' But whatever the truth, an original personality was so unusual at Nevis, that she was stimulated in anticipation and impatient to make its acquaintance.

And he, too, was primed for the meeting. Who among the ladies would not have sung the praises of the charming, the pretty, the accomplished, the intelligent, the bereaved Mrs. Nisbet? Not to have done so might have seemed to betray envy of superior merit. At any rate Miss Herbert, who had the born matchmaker's freedom from qualms and hesitations, would not have neglected to sow the seed. The ground was already prepared, for he was desperately lonely. The lawsuit brought by the colonists had confined him for months to his ship, and the resultant state of heart and mind was one of abnormal susceptibility. The only obstacle was money, or rather the lack of it. But he applied successfully to Uncle Suckling; and there were promises, somewhat vague, of help from Mr. Herbert. The engagement was quickly announced, but it was the Navy and not finance which delayed the marriage. For nearly a year, on and off, his ship was away, during which nothing

of his resolution abated. If the language was a little forced he roughly meant it when he wrote: 'My heart yearns for you, it is with you: my mind dwells upon nought else but you. Absent from you I feel no pleasure. It is you, my dearest Fanny, who are everything to me.' A shrewd observer did not mistake these honourable sentiments for passion. Nor did Nelson, and one admires him, in these days of agonising after eroticism, though the method is a little naïve, for not pretending anything else. 'His Royal Highness,'¹ he writes to Fanny,

'tells me he believes I am married for he never saw a lover so easy, or say so little of the object he has a regard for. When I tell him I certainly am not, he says then he is sure I must have a great esteem for you and that is not what is (vulgarly), I do not much like the use of the word, called love. He is right—my love is founded on esteem; the only foundation that can make the passion last.'

Well, that was very satisfactory to know. Perhaps she had hoped for more in the beginning. Women are supposed to. But then a widow, with a child to support, can dispense with the romantic more easily than, say, the virgin daughter of a wealthy father. If she missed the more exciting emotion, his sincerity amply filled its place. Also she admired her fiancé, of whom people spoke as of a coming man. There was probably some truth in it too, or the Prince, who had hitherto kept entirely aloof, would not have consented—no, demanded—to give away the bride. It was a flattering condescension, and thought a lot of at the time.

But how small a thing it must seem now, with the glory of the Nile still glowing in the sky; and her husband's name ringing through Europe. The burden of fame sits easily on that dignified, almost massive calm; as though the honours showering were by right and to be expected, and that when, after St. Vincent, she became her Ladyship, that was nothing very special for the niece of the President of the Council of Nevis; nothing at any rate, which she could appear to think much of.

She never made any fuss over her husband's achievements. She was too well bred. Besides, she had always believed in him, even during those trying years of peace, when they had lived with her father-in-law in Norfolk, and he had eaten his heart out pining for a ship. It has been a test for her loyalty. After the semi-official position in Nevis, to live in a country parsonage on the

¹ Prince William Henry, afterwards William IV.

limited means of a half-pay captain, was to descend in the social scale. It was so different from the West Indies. At home one was nobody, barely on the outer circle of the 'County,' and that as a poor relation. There was that incident, for instance, of not being invited to the funeral of Lord Orford, a neighbour and a distant connection. True, it had been an oversight, and they had received an apology, but the memory remained and rankled. And her husband had not bothered, except once when he had made a point of her calling on Lady Walpole. He was not the sort to 'go down' with country neighbours. He did not shoot or race, and he was not a 'party man.'

No, it was not a happy time, though there was comfort in the thought of providing home and education for the fatherless Josiah. But the wife of a man who is out of a job, and thinks he is on the shelf, is more likely to add to than to console his irritation. She could do nothing but hope as fervently as he for a war, or a command, as a change from domesticity. If it piqued her to be reminded that she was less to him than his profession, she didn't reveal it; it would have been just the same even if she had had his love. She knew that nothing but work could cure his restlessness, and that it was not her fault if he was bored with their home.

And when at last he got his ship, what a happy change! The four years he was away in the Mediterranean were perhaps the best in her married life. All his old affection revived, and as the strain of interminable cruising, gales, heat, fevers, and wounds began to tell on his not very robust body, he looked forward to nothing better than to return once more to her—and to rest; whilst she longed also for the opportunity it would give her of nursing him back to health. The dangers he was running were vivid in her imagination. She became nervous, made herself ill, and begged him to come home. The boarding of the *San José*, which delighted England, only increased her anxiety. She was terrified of this childish pursuit of 'desperate actions.' Why couldn't he leave that sort of thing to his captains—surely he had given enough proof of his courage. It was in those days that her feelings for him came nearest to love. His letters, the news of the fleet and the events in the Mediterranean, the prospects of a peace or of his getting leave, was the part that mattered in her life. There was another source of happiness in the improvement of her social standing. Having a husband at the War and serving under Lord Hood, who, as everybody knew, had charge of its critical sector, made all the

difference in her situation. People called to sympathise with her, and to learn, at first-hand, news from 'the front,'—the front at that time being our dozen line-of-battle ships. She was glad that Josiah was with his stepfather on the *Agamemnon*. What could have been nicer for them both, and what better start for Josiah's career? She was grateful, too, to that English lady who had been looking after him at Naples, and would have liked to hear more of her, but knew that it was no good expecting it in the letters of her husband. 'Lady Hamilton has been wonderfully kind and good to Josiah; she is a young woman of amiable manner, and who does honour to the state in which she has been raised' was all he wrote, and the rest, as usual, concerned the fleet and the war. She hoped that Josiah had made a good impression. Those people (the lady's husband, it appeared, was the British minister) might be useful to him afterwards, and to Horatio also, if he played his cards well. 'Interest,' she had long learnt, was indispensable in the Navy. She only hoped he would not be too outspoken, and remember the Hamiltons' important position. He was sometimes 'difficult' in society, especially with women. It would be such a pity if, by offending Lady Hamilton, he spoilt the splendid chance which this mission to Naples had given him.

It was four years later when she next heard that name. She had changed a little. In becoming the wife of the most celebrated man in England, she had filled out physically and contracted spiritually. The effects of the economies and obscurity of Burnham Thorpe, of the slight but unmistakable jealousy on the part of his relations, and also, perhaps, of her genuine worries for his safety, could be traced in a hardness about the mouth. But all of that was over and done with. They were famous and affluent, able to move about from London to Bath, and only see his relations as often as she liked. If only the Peace would arrive and bring him home, so that they might enjoy the name and the comfort he had earned. What could keep him away after the Nile, when all the French ships were gone and he had won every honour that was possible? She would have thought that even he, vain as she knew him, must be satiated by now with the adulation of Naples. There was, however, one great comfort, in that if it was his wound which really kept him, there were people like the Hamiltons looking after it, and an English house in which he could lie. Lady Hamilton's kindness had evidently passed all bounds. She seemed to be a delicately strung woman. He had described her swooning on

board the *Vanguard*. She could imagine his embarrassment, with the King and Queen coming up in the barge. Quite a theatrical scene.

After that first letter, written in the flush of his triumph, there was a long silence. She could not understand it. Though with only his left hand to write with, and busy managing the crisis at Naples, surely he could have sent her a word, if only to say he was well or ill. Always before he had managed to do that, even in that agonising chase after the French, when he thought he had missed them for good and worried almost to the point of despair. She waited patiently, but nothing came. She read in the papers of the revolution, the evacuation of the Royal Family, and their removal in the *Vanguard*. She wondered if he was still living with the Hamiltons. She wrote to Burnham Thorpe, but the relations had no more news of him than herself. England was thrilled with the melodrama of real life, in which Kings and Queens and a British Admiral played. Everybody came to her to hear the story, expecting his pen would have supplied her with the details. It embarrassed her to have to confess her ignorance. Their unconcealed surprise when she could tell them nothing increased her uneasiness immeasurably. She was aware that 'people were talking'—that going into society she aroused a special kind of interest.

After that the truth was not long in dawning. For one thing it was blazed in the newspapers; and no doubt there was some candid friend or relation, who 'thought it her duty to report what people were saying—of course, it was only a rumour, but one which Lady Nelson should be the first to know'; or perhaps she guessed with a sudden inspiration which left her bewildered that it had not come before. And immediately, of course, she could see the whole affair. That she could have received so innocently his account of the scene on board the *Vanguard*, and the subsequent ones at Naples! How palpable it all was now. His stay in that house, his wound tended by her, the rescue and escape, the opportunities. How plain it was, and yet there was nothing strange in her long blindness. There were so many things she had had to visualise: the fêting, his health, the complicated sequence of stirring events. The Hamiltons had been only incidental to the rest, she had never placed them in the foreground.

The question was what to do? Obviously it must be nothing violent. The story was probably exaggerated. After all, it was

only natural that worn out physically and mentally as he was, he should crave the hands and voice of a woman. The trouble was that she had not been there to be the woman. Still it was not too late. If he could not come home, she would go out and join him. As his wife her place was by his side, especially in view of the position, almost ambassadorial, which he now occupied. The tone in which he turned down her project, at its very first suggestion, was peremptory, almost brutal. 'I could, if you had come,' he wrote, 'only have struck my flag, and carried you back again, for it would have been impossible to set up an establishment either at Naples or Bologna.' It was his first communication for many months. The handwriting had almost ceased to be familiar.

She felt that she had made a tactical error. He must not think that she was going to use force. That would drive him into the arms of the other. It would be better not even to hint at what she knew. So she accepted the decision, and wrote again humbly, almost apologetically: 'It has been my study to please and make you happy and I still flatter myself we shall meet before very long.'

When at last he started home, it was travelling by land, and, of course, with the Hamiltons. News of that incredible triumphal progress travelled on before it. Its extravagance is reminiscent of one of those allegorical processions of Mars and Venus, of which the German baroque Emperors were fond; only here the symbol was less significant than the fact. Fêtes, fireworks, dinners, balls, addresses of welcome, and state receptions were nothing but a background to this self-trumpeting alliance. The bruit of it came to her as she waited calmly in London. But she remained open-minded, resolved not to allow anything to predetermine her judgment.

The party landed at Yarmouth. She did not go to meet him. She had considered doing so, but there was one overwhelming argument against it. She must greet him first alone. That at least would give him the chance of offering her an explanation, or of convincing her that none was necessary.

At Yarmouth they would all be bunched in the same hotel, perhaps have to travel to London in the same carriage. She would merely be the fourth in the party, and in the eyes of the mob, the one that counted least. Besides, how could she meet that woman casually, like an ordinary acquaintance? Afterwards, perhaps, but it was first for him to ask if she were willing. So she remained with his father at the hotel in St. James'. And when he arrived

and they told her he was not alone, she found it difficult to believe. It showed, even for him, whose judgment was so easily swept away by impulse, such an extraordinary lack of everything which a civilised person should possess : appreciation, tact, sense of proportion. She felt that she could not face such an interview. But when they came in, the truly surprising nature of the vision drove out all other thoughts. She was prepared by the reports for something unusual ; but this immense, flamboyant, ship's figure-head of a woman, attitudinising in the dingy little hotel parlour like some stage Juno reduced to performing in a travelling booth, without even a primitive natural grace to make up for her lack of dignity, was fantastic, grotesque. How could one take such a creature seriously ? He must be mad, everybody must be mad, to think of it.

She was prepared for a strained situation, but it was the less so because neither seemed to feel the least embarrassment. That was what she could not get over—the complete absence of any sign of *gêne*. It was as though each had come to show the other off, like two lovers seeking a godmother's blessing. Every sentence, every look, every pose of hers was for him, whether it was directly addressed or not ; and he received it with the self-conscious assurance of a partner chosen before the world. She wondered if it was all deliberate, part of a prearranged plan for making it clear that their intimacy was irrevocable ; or were they really unaware of what she, and every onlooker, must be seeing ? It was hardly possible. And yet when she looked at the object of his passion, she began to think him capable of anything, even of forgetting that his wife existed. As for the woman, she at least could not be blind and deaf to its implications, though she could pretend to be if it were policy.

When the visit was over, she took stock of her position. One thing was certain—she could not feel any jealousy. It would be as easy to be jealous of one of his ships. On the other hand, something would have to be done, for both their sakes. The affair might be tolerated in Naples, but he could not afford to flaunt it under the eyes of London Society. It was typical that she thought first of their social position, and only second of her personal pride. Not that she could ignore that entirely, but if it could help him to sacrifice her dignity, she might have done it. She cared for him, she had tender pity for him ; more than ever, after seeing the other, was convinced that herself was the woman he needed, who could

look after him. And it was necessary, with his broken health and the nervous irritation which resulted from his wounds. Her affection was deep and steady ; it had never weakened or changed when he was near or away. She appreciated as much as any the glory and honour he had won, but she did not wallow in it and hunger for more like the other. For her he had won enough. It was his life, not his titles and stars she valued. All she had lived for was his safe return so that they could enjoy their lives together in comfort and quiet. She had recognised the dangers he ran through his vanity, and had tried to save him from them. But it had not paid to put his good first. She should have fed him with fulsome flattery, as the other did continually, like a foolish irresponsible mother who gives her child to eat every time it cries. Heavens, what children men are ! How he needed her common sense, if only he would let her help him ! But he was in just that mood of sensitiveness to criticism, which tends to reject most violently the truth.

And then the hurt to her pride, though it was less keen, somehow, since she had seen her rival—she could hardly think of herself in such a competition—needed action to salve it. If she acquiesced in being a spectator of the liaison, she threw away everything which gave her value as a woman, both in her own and in the eyes of the world.

But plainly nothing could be decided on this one occasion. It had to be seen how he was going to behave, before she could take any definite step. She had not yet lost him entirely. Here in London he could not fail, at last, to see the vulgarity of the woman and her impairing effect on his reputation. She still believed that all might yet be well.

In the next few weeks that illusion was finally destroyed. He and the Hamiltons were more inseparable than ever. She had to choose between joining the party or being openly neglected. The public had taken the couple to its heart. The cheers wherever they appeared were as much for the romantic connection as they were for the victor of the Nile. The night when they went to the Opera the two of them had to acknowledge the applause, standing together in the front of the box like Royalty receiving an ovation. Overcome with disgust at the exhibition, she came very near to fainting. The next day everybody knew that she had ceased to condone. He alone seemed unaware that a crisis was inevitable. In face of such obtuseness she could not bring herself to speak. What was

the good ? If he could not perceive its blatancy for himself, what hope was there that he would make a change in his conduct ?

Every day she felt her position more intolerable. When the three of them went to stay with William Beckford, and she was left in town, there was relief on both sides. But the event was decisive. Whether he knew it or not (she was past minding which, all that mattered now was to settle the future), it had symbolised his choice. The visit lasted several weeks. He returned to Arlington Street as though it were the most natural thing in the world to go on a visit with 'friends' rather than with his wife. She bore him no malice for the preference, only it would be convenient to have some definite arrangement, and she was beginning to be impatient that he could not see its necessity. 'Dear Lady Hamilton,' he began at breakfast on the very next morning. She stopped his remark by getting up from her chair. It was as good an opportunity as she needed.

'I am sick of hearing of dear Lady Hamilton, and am resolved that you shall give up either her or me.' There, it was done ; and by the gush in her heart immediately released she knew that it was right. They had hold of reality at last. She had shown him the only two possible ways, to part or to make her full amends. The issue was now plain. She waited confidently for him to accept one or the other, perfectly satisfied that, whichever it should be, he could not escape the answer she demanded.

But was it so simple ? There was something in his reply she had not allowed for : 'Take care, Fanny, what you say. I love you sincerely, but I cannot forget my obligations to Lady Hamilton, or speak of her otherwise than with affection and admiration !' She was taken unawares. The situation she had built up was trembling. In a moment it would crash. Seized with panic, she muttered something vaguely about her mind being made up, left the room and shortly after drove from the house. It was for good.

She saw him once or twice again, but with little hope of being permanently reconciled. Whilst he could not see from her point of view, or understand that she had any grounds for complaint, that was impossible. When he rejoined the fleet before the Battle of Copenhagen, she instinctively knew that he was passing out of her life. The last word came soon after ; 'My only wish is to be left to myself.' She wondered why he had not added, 'and Emma.'

The break extended to his relations ; she had never got on too well with any of them, except her father-in-law. She was glad to

go on seeing the old man—they had always been friends. Besides, it was a kind of justification before the world. It showed that to the person most competent to judge, her conduct was unexceptionable. But she had few other connections in England, and after a time went to live in Paris with Josiah and his family.

There she lived a great many years, long after the last great triumph and the retreat into obscurity of Emma. She followed the story with intense interest, and if her heart ever broke, it was when she heard of his death. In the few years which elapsed between their break and the end, he continued to fill her life completely. She had no vindictiveness, no jealousy ; she rarely thought of the other woman, except to sympathise with him for having to live with her. If the question was ever raised, she went out of her way to defend him. She herself had done the only possible, the only dignified thing. Of that, except for that single moment when he had replied to her ultimatum, she never allowed herself to doubt. But she did not look for her peace of mind in the barren satisfaction of self-righteousness. Her real consolation was twofold : the knowledge that if he had lived he would have come to regret the exchange, and the fact that by his death he had been saved from such a catastrophe.

G. A. M.

JUSTICE.

BY MARTIN GILKES.

THE clock in the ancient tower above the Town Hall is just preparing to strike eleven, and the casual little crowd that has been gathering all the morning until it has now reached quite a respectable size begins to melt away. For the spectacle of the day is over and there is nothing more worth waiting to see. The motor-car—no longer as in more spacious days a stately coach and four—has come and gone, bearing its solitary occupant sitting in state and clothed like the Devil himself in dreadful scarlet. The trumpets have sounded a fanfare to welcome him, and he has stepped out, to be greeted by his marshal at the steps and disappear in a flash of ceremonial through the double doors.

Inside, the court-room is already full—too full it seems. For it was built for our fathers' fathers, and since those days the town has grown. Everywhere are the blue uniforms of police and the black stuff gowns of ushers. In the gallery that is reserved for mere spectators there seems not room for a single person more. Downstairs at the back the witnesses are sitting uneasily on hard benches of wood; most of them anxious eyed, like out-patients at a hospital—waiting. In the middle on padded forms sit the barristers in gown and wig with little curls and pigtail hanging down their necks, a dress that gives them an appearance at once ridiculous and terrifying: so incongruously do the childish curls sit above the hard, thin-lipped legal faces. And in the front one side holds the Press and the other the jury, shut in its wooden box.

A voice calls 'Silence!' and miraculously the babel of tongues stops. Like little boys in school, the whole court rises, whilst the scarlet-robed figure makes his entry, bows to right and left and takes his seat.

The curtain is up. The drama may begin.

It is as much a drama as any ever played upon the stage. More so, perhaps. For it is played out in real earnest to the bitter end. It is the criminal Assize: 'General Sessions,' as the juror's notice runs, 'of Oyer and Terminer and Gaol Delivery,' and they are all met 'well and truly to try the issues as between our Sovereign Lord the King and the Prisoners indicted. . . .'

High over all beneath his canopy the judge sits in his great armchair ; a little figure dressed up like a doll in robes and heavy powdered wig that falls down like an elephant's ears over his shoulders ; grotesque, he almost seems, and yet somehow tremendous. For in him is gathered all the majesty of England's Justice, as if there were written across him in letters as scarlet as his gown, ' I am the Law.' But one needs no letters : it is written on his face. A face, if the eye has power to see beyond the wig, as calm and serene as if it had been carved from a block of stone, and as impartial and as terrifying as a block of stone. No soft curves of weakness or of pity, no twists of malice or of anger, but straight brows, straight nose, straight mouth. Perhaps not human ; but, one wonders, is Justice human ?

From his high seat he dominates the court, until the eye leaves him for another figure, two other figures rather, that are raised up like him above the level of the rest. They are, of course, the prisoners in the dock ; two, because they are both joined together in the offence which has brought them to this place. They stand side by side, acutely conscious of their position, though they show it in different ways. The man fidgets from one foot to the other, his hands close and uncloze upon the dock-rail. The woman has a baby at her breast ; she hugs it fiercely to herself, and every now and then darts glances of terror and defiance wonderfully mingled at the court.

There they must stand, mounted on their pillory, whilst the long slow ceremonial proceeds—the roll-call of the jury, the administration of the oath, the reading of the indictment.

Then the clerk takes them in turn and asks his formal question. To the woman first : ' Anna Maria Jones, you have been indicted before this court of committing bigamy with John Zebedee Marling. . . . Are you guilty or not guilty ? ' And a voice, faint with shame and bewilderment, thin as the note of a bird, comes from the bowed head. ' Guilty,' it whispers ; and on the word the baby wakes. In a second, as by a miracle, she is changed : no longer abject woman, but transfigured. With a gesture sublime in its absolute simplicity, forgetting self and judge and all the watching eyes upon her, she opens her bosom and stifles the child's shrill wailing against her naked breast.

Even Justice for a moment is silent. Then the clerk takes up his parable. It is the man's turn now. ' John Zebedee Marling, you are indicted of aiding and abetting the woman Anna Maria

Jones. . . . Are you guilty or not guilty ? ' And he answers in a firm, clear voice, thrusting out his chin and drawing down his heavy black brows, ' Not guilty, I says.' And the whole court stirs—with relief, perhaps. For the drama is to proceed. There is a case to try after all.

Now at last the prisoners may sit down ; still in the dock, still mounted high, that all may see and note every change that shall pass across their faces and so at first hand judge guilt or innocence, if they can. For trial by ordeal to-day is only in part abolished. No small part of a prisoner's battle is the impression he can make upon the court and particularly upon the jury.

And the jury are watching him from their box, the twelve good men and true.

The woman is no concern of theirs. She has surrendered herself into the hands of the judge, and it is for him to decide the sentence which she shall receive. She stands beside her man. With him she committed her offence ; with him she has been indicted ; with him she shall receive her sentence, when his guilt or innocence has been thoroughly established. The court has almost forgotten her, until suddenly the child lifts its head from its mother's nipple and emits a piercing shriek ; the forerunner evidently of many more. Usher looks at usher and shrugs helplessly. For this is the one kind of disturbance with which they are utterly incompetent to deal. There is but one thing to be done, and the judge, making a virtue of necessity, orders her to be taken below until the time for sentence shall have come. So she goes with her wailing burden, her arm firmly yet kindly held by a blue-clad wardress, not to appear again until the finish of the play.

But the man remains, apparently unaffected by anything that has happened, sitting in his chair and staring stolidly in front of him. He would not be a bad-looking fellow but for that stolidity. He is a type common in the valleys of the Shropshire border that run up into Wales. Dark little Welsh and solid upstanding English have gone together to his making. He has height (that comes from his yeoman ancestors), and breadth of shoulder and clean length of limb. But his hair is dark as a raven's wing, his eyes a little too closely set and his cheek sallow as a city worker's.

His type is common and his story common too in the country from which he comes. Part of his story—all that is relevant to the single fact that he married a woman already married—comes out in court. The issue for the law is simple. The woman knew (she

has admitted it) that her first husband was still alive ; but did the man ? There is a reasonable doubt. For she was married first, a girl of seventeen, from one of those hard-bitten little white-washed farms that cling to the skirts of Caradoc mountain, and merely crossed the road to set up house in a labourer's cottage over the way. There she lived two years, long enough to have two children, both still-born. And with the birth—or death—of the second her husband left her, for the good and sufficient reason that he had found another job over the mountain shoulder and wanted no encumbrances. So after this short though comprehensive experience of wedded bliss, as naturally and simply as a dog returns to a former master, she went back to her father, and resumed the duties to which she had grown accustomed when a maiden. In time there came a stranger, from the Clun country fifteen miles away, to work upon the timber in the big Plaish woods that lie between Caradoc and Wenlock Edge. His name was John Zebedee Marling and he lodged in her father's house.

All this comes out in evidence. Counsel for the prosecution puts the prisoner in the witness-box, but he can make little of him. Prisoner, it becomes increasingly evident, fails altogether to grasp the point in which he has offended. Counsel is suave. He might be questioning a child, as indeed to all intents and purposes he is. 'And living in her father's house, what were your relations with the female prisoner ?'

A very straightforward question, one might imagine, but the prisoner regards him with a blank and bovine stare. Counsel tries again.

'Let me put it to you like this. Did not on Christmas Day morning—did not Mr. Jones come into your room and find you in bed with the female prisoner, his wife ?'

Prisoner understands this question better. 'Oh, aye,' he answers. 'E come in.'

'And what did Mr. Jones say on that occasion ?'

Prisoner looks blank, he knits his brows. At last, after profound reflection, 'Nowt !' he says.

Counsel for the moment is nonplussed. It is in his brief that the outraged husband, having been specially sent for to come and see what he actually did see, announced himself in no uncertain terms. But the prisoner is not to be shaken.

'Nowt,' he repeats, 'E didn't say nowt—nary a word !' in answer to every cunning variant of the same question.

Counsel harks back. For the prisoner is making too good an impression on the jury. 'And now,' he asks with an air of triumph, 'what do you say that your relations with the female prisoner were?'

'I were a lodger,' says the prisoner simply, obviously thinking this a complete and sufficient answer to the question.

His examination proceeds. For his whole story, unfolded by counsel in his opening speech, must be proved point by point under oath in the witness-box. He lodged at the farm and lived with the woman one year, two years more. Then a child was born, the child that all the court have seen in its mother's arms; and then with speed, before even the christening, they were married by the registrar in the nearest town.

'And why were you so anxious to marry her?' counsel asks, suave once more; for question and answer have proceeded as smoothly as he could have wished.

'Well, yer see,' comes the answer, delivered with another puzzled frown, 'it were like this. There were t' child an' . . . an' I thought as I'd make 'er an honest 'ooman. I thought as I'd act like a Britisher to 'er.'

Counsel is puzzled—or professes to be so. He makes great play with his eyebrows to the jury, when the judge who hitherto has sat like a graven image suddenly becomes human. A smile breaks up his face into an infinity of wrinkles.

'I think—I think, Mr. Purvis, he means that he thought he would—er—play the game. Act like a Britisher, play the game. A patriotic sentiment, Mr. Purvis,' and he closes up again as tight as an oyster.

'Thank you, m'lud. Thank you.' Mr. Purvis bows his thanks and smiles in his turn, well pleased. He has had time to decide upon his line of questioning. He turns again upon his victim.

'You thought that you would play the game by her? Exactly. But was that the only reason why you were in such a hurry to marry her?'

Hot comes the answer, with no pause for reflection, no thought for the trap so cunningly laid.

'Naw! I did it t' keep 'er away from that there skunk as was a-comin' after 'er agen. . . .'

'And whom' (counsel's voice is bland and innocent as a child's) —'whom do you mean by "that there skunk"?'

The prisoner is excited now. His eye flashes: he looks ten times more a man than at any moment since he came into court.

'Why, 'oo should I mean? 'Arry Jones, o'course! 'Er 'usband as was wantin' to come back an' sayin' as 'e 'ad 'is rights over 'er! "Jack," she says to me, "I ain't goin' back to that there barstard,—'usband or no 'usband," she says. So I thought as I'd act like a man an' marry 'er an' then 'e couldn't 'ave 'er.'

He flows on like a river in spate, really stirred at last; and counsel makes no effort to stop him. The trap has been sprung: the quarry is caught fast. Let him talk now, when with every word he but makes his guilt the plainer. He runs on, trying to tell the court how he did his best to protect his woman, until the judge with a gesture silences him.

'Did you not realise' (the voice of the Law is very dry), 'did you not realise when you married her that you were committing bigamy?'

All his animation leaves him, as he tries to understand and answer the question.

At last, 'I don't know 'bout bigamy. I don't rightly understand that. But I married 'er so as I could keep 'er an' act honest by her an' the child.'

'But you knew she was already married and that her husband was still alive?'

It is hardly so much a question as a statement of fact, and he accepts it as such.

'E were wantin' 'er back. 'E said so, the dirty 'ound. But when I married 'er, that gave 'im something to think about!'

A little titter breaks out in court, to be sternly suppressed by the ushers almost as soon as born; and since the judge has finished with his questions, counsel rises to continue. There is little more for him to do, except formally in evidence to prove to the hilt the rest of the story.

Witnesses come and go; her father, to prove that she is his daughter and the prisoner lodged with them; the registrar's clerk, who swears to the entry in the register; and last, the real husband, who first deserted her and then drove her into second marriage in her efforts to escape from him. He makes but a brief appearance. Did he find the prisoner living with his wife? He did. And did he tell him in plain terms that he was her lawful husband? He did. And the prisoner knew quite well who he was? He did.

It is enough and more than enough. The Law which he has

broken has revenged itself ; but even in revenge the Law is just. Counsel for the defence must still be heard. It is not much that he can do. For the ground has been cut from underneath his feet and his speech must resolve itself into little more than a plea for mitigation. One point, however, he scores. He puts the prisoner back into the witness-box, and handling him carefully to put him at his ease, he asks him just one question.

‘ You have told m’lud that you contracted this marriage to save this woman from her former husband. The jury have seen him for themselves. They can draw their own conclusions as to what her life with him would have been. Now, prisoner, tell me, tell the jury—do you love this woman ? ’

It is a crude question, but counsel knows very well what he is about. This is a question which the prisoner has no difficulty in understanding. It sets him free to say what he has been burning to say ever since he came into court. Eagerly he leaps to answer it.

‘ Love ’er ? ’ (his voice is hoarse with naked truth). ‘ Gor blime, why did I marry ’er, else ? She’s my ’ooman, I tell yer, and I done the honest to ’er, married ’er an’ all, an’ there we was livin’ ’appy, doin’ no ’arm, livin’ . . . livin’ ’appy, I tell yer . . . an’ then the copper comes an’ takes us orf . . . me an’ my ’ooman an’ my child. . . . What for, Gor knows ! An’ I done the honest by her . . . I wasn’ one to let ’er go back to that there swine. . . . ’

Emotion reduces him to incoherence. Defiantly he glares round the court, like a bull tormented by picadors, for no reason—for no reason in the world that he can understand.

Last comes the judge. Since a jury has been empanelled, it must formally deliver a verdict, clear though the case may be. In his dry and dusty voice, like the crackling of a legal parchment, he puts the issues to them. What they have to decide is simple : did the male prisoner know when he married the woman, Anna Maria Jones, that her first husband was still alive ? What consequences will follow from their verdict is his responsibility, not theirs. The prisoner may love the woman, he may have done what according to his lights he thought best for her ; but marriage is a sacred institution, which it is the duty of the Law to protect. The woman’s first husband is still alive, and by the law of God and man she is still married to him. Yet the prisoner went through a form of marriage with her. They have heard his statement under oath in the witness-box as to his reasons for doing so. ‘ I did it to keep her from that swine,’ he said, ‘ who was wanting to come back and

asserting his rights over her.' The question for them is simple. He puts it to them once again. Did the prisoner know? Let them consider their verdict.

The question indeed is simple; so simple that there is no need for the jury to retire. The foreman turns in his place and in a hurried whisper consults his fellows. In them all, it is very evident, Justice and sentiment are running counter. Much as they would like to acquit the prisoner, they cannot. He himself has made that impossible. They must find him guilty. But what will happen afterwards, whether after paying the penalty which the Law demands he and his woman will come together once again, or whether prison, as it can so easily, will break two lives in pieces and she go back at last to be a drudge again in her father's house, or whether (most horrible of all to contemplate) she will suffer the man who so lightly left her to assert once more his legal rights upon her—all this is no concern of theirs. That great responsibility, as they have heard from his own lips, rests upon the judge. Theirs is a simple duty; and so eleven heads nod an answer to the foreman's whispered question. He turns towards the canopied chair, and rising from his seat hands over the final burden of decision, that may make or mar two human lives, into the competent hands that are waiting to receive it. 'Guilty, my lord,' he says.

It is nearly over. Only remains the final scene for which all the actors must assemble. So from the cells below the court the same wardress in blue brings back the woman prisoner. With bent head she comes, still clasping the baby in her arms. It is asleep, and miraculously right up to the drama's close remains placidly asleep. The mother holds it close, as if she drew some secret comfort in her ordeal from its presence. One look she gives the man, as she takes her place beside him in the dock, but he has no glance to spare for her. He stands—at the end as at the beginning—quite still, wrapped in that kind of surly lethargy which is the outward defence of country people against trouble. Only the knuckles of his clenched hands give him away. They are white against the bronze.

The last word is with the judge, and he is in no hurry to begin. For a full long minute he sits motionless, whilst absolute silence settles upon the court. Then, leaning forward in his chair, looking more like a graven image than ever, yet more than ever tremendous at the moment of decision, he delivers judgment.

'Anna Maria Jones, you have pleaded guilty to the crime of

bigamy. John Zebedee Marling, you have been found guilty by the jury of aiding and abetting the same crime. As to the nature of that crime, the gravity of which you do not appear to realise, I will only say that no man, whilst the law remains what it is, may knowingly marry a woman whilst her first husband is still alive. And it is my duty to see that those who break this law are punished according to their deserts. I have listened with attention to your trial, and to such extenuating circumstances as there are I have given full consideration.'

The dry voice pauses, the little figure draws itself erect—well aware, perhaps, that no small part of punishment is suspense, though one can tell nothing from the face. Then briefly, crisply the voice resumes.

'Anna Maria Jones and John Zebedee Marling, I shall sentence you both together. You shall be imprisoned for two days.'

It is over. Man and woman are led away ; only later to realise that, as they spent last night in separate cells in custody, by to-morrow's dawn they will be free. And to-morrow's night shall find them together again, as Nature, who is stronger than any law, meant them to be.

‘*PLAGUE, PESTILENCE, AND FAMINE*’: *THE WORDS OF THE LITANY.*

CERTAIN parts of the Litany must often have struck us in church as peculiarly inapplicable to our present conditions.

This would apply with especial emphasis to the prayer, ‘From lightning and tempest; from plague, pestilence, and famine; from battle and murder, and from sudden death, God Lord deliver us.’ But when we remember that these words were put together for the first Prayer Book of King Edward the Sixth, published in March 1549, our opinion about their inapplicability should be considerably altered.

The Plague, or Black Death, had never really left this country since it had been introduced from the Continent in 1348. It entered England at a port in Dorsetshire and, spreading rapidly over the land, reached Wales, Scotland, and Ireland in the next year.

So conspicuously was 1349 a ‘Plague year’ that in a certain official document of the 23rd year of the reign of Edward III it is alluded to as ‘in tempore pestilentiae.’

The Plague kept on breaking out from time to time until, after its last explosion in London in 1665, the Great Fire cleared it from the Metropolis for ever.

A study of the Calendar of State Papers in the Record Office makes it quite clear that the Plague was a feature of the reign of Henry VIII. For we find constant references to that epidemic disease we call ‘Bubonic Plague,’ and now know to be due to infection with a specific bacillus, the *Bacillus Pestis*. It came originally *via* Southern Europe from the East, where it still exists. In Florence it was the occasion of Boccaccio’s ‘Decameron.’

It was to escape the Plague of 1665 that Milton left London and went to live in a cottage still standing at Chalfont St. Giles in Buckinghamshire, where he wrote much of ‘Paradise Regained.’ It was, too, on account of Plague that Newton left Cambridge and, returning to his native Woolsthorpe, saw the apple fall that led to such momentous calculations.

Of course efforts were made to combat the pestilence, but with very little success. The burning even of various kinds of aromatic wood in the streets had no effect. Attention was early directed to the decomposing garbage and to the filthy state of the streets and their open sewers.

Not for about two hundred years after this date (1525) were the scientific principles of ventilation understood, so that the houses, even of the wealthy where there was no overcrowding, were lamentably deficient in fresh air. There was a most unfortunate impression abroad that smells were in themselves disease-bringing, and that the air was in itself ' pestilential ' and ought, therefore, at times to be carefully excluded. Thus Erasmus in one of his letters (undated but written between 1512 and 1515) recommends that the windows of the English houses ' be made to fit much more tightly than they do, and that there be no access of noxious winds through gaping seams.' In 1543 the first serious order to have the streets of London cleaned was promulgated. It commanded the killing of dogs, where to-day we should kill the rats.

It is quite interesting to learn that Erasmus highly disapproved of the English houses, as built with too little regard to the aspect of their doors and windows towards the sun. But until well within our own memory this factor was often not reckoned with by architects.

Of course far more important than all these things was the disposal of the bodies of persons dead of the Plague itself. The burial of the dead had for many years before the time of Henry VIII been a serious problem even in the ' no-plague ' years. The churchyards attached to the London City churches, never large, were constantly being built over as the need for new houses became urgent. New spaces were from time to time acquired, but these had to be attached to the consecrated houses, the monasteries, and the monks came to regard the fees for the burials as an important part of their income. In this connexion there is extant a most significant document in the Record Office in the form of a letter from a Dr. John London to Cromwell, Henry's minister, dated October 22, 1538, which reads :

' There is a very evil custom grounded upon the insatiable covetousness of the monks. In all Coventry be but two parish churches, which stand with the Priory as it were in one churchyard and in the heart of the city. When pestilence reigns, the curates of both churches collect the corpses at the great church door of the

Priory in the cemetery and there leave them till after *dirige* or mass in the parish church.

'Then a rich man pays a noble or a poor man twelve pence for assoyement, and all even if they be in the porch till the monk with his stole give them (as they call it) assoyement. I have advertised the prior to leave it, and you will do well to annul it.

'If the town could obtain the White Friars church and churchyard, it would be a more wholesome burial ground, for it lies out of the heart of the city.'

In the September of the same year the Mayor and Aldermen of Coventry addressed Cromwell as follows :

'It is reported that the Grey and White Friars of Coventry are to be suppressed. Their churches can ill be spared, for in time of plague sick people resort to hear divine service. There are but two parish churches in the town, and no small number of Christian people belong to them. If, in time of plague, sick people resorted to the parish churches, they would infect the whole city. We beg you, therefore, to intercede with the king that there two of Friars remain, the religious persons thereof to be reformed at the King's pleasure.'

It is therefore evident that the suppression of the monasteries did not tend to improve the public health, however much it may have improved ecclesiastical morality.

During the whole reign of Henry VIII and as late as 1549 the Black Death was a very real and serious happening. Now it was in Henry's reign that the first version of the English Prayer Book made its appearance. It was confessedly to be in harmony with the new views of the Reformers—that is, it was anti-Papal—but the specific mention of Plague is so interesting to us, seeing that this cannot but be an allusion to the Black Death. The Plague had been a scourge from the year of Henry's accession, when it was in Calais as well as in England. In 1511 the widowed mother of Edward V died of it. In 1513 the Venetian ambassador writes home that in London 200 deaths a day are taking place from the Plague, and that it had reached the fleet. In 1515 twenty-seven nuns died of the Plague within a few days in a convent at the Minories. In 1517 the state of matters was worse, for the Plague was now accompanied by the Sweating Sickness or *Sudor Anglicus*, the third visitation of that pestilence since its introduction by the army of King Henry VII in 1485. In October 1517 the Court was still away from London at Windsor, and by November 16 things had become so bad that

the Venetian envoy implored the Senate of Venice to allow him to return, as he thought it was time to 'escape from sedition, sweat and plague.' By 'sedition,' an Italian writing in 1513 could only have meant the doctrines of the Reformers. On July 22, 1518, the ambassador again asked to be recalled, as two of his servants had died of the Plague and he himself had had the sweating sickness twice in one week.

In 1529 Campeggio, the papal legate, wrote that the Plague had begun to rage very vigorously. In 1531 the ambassador to Venice reported 300 to 400 deaths from Plague a week. The summer of 1540 was a sickly one, and a new type of disease, the 'hot ague,' came to be mentioned; this may have been 'the new ague' to which we find a reference in 1537. In 1543 there was a great death (*magna mortalitas*) which lasted so long that the Michaelmas term had to be kept at St. Albans.

It is, therefore, perfectly certain that those scholars who composed the first English version of the Litany (1543) had the best of reasons for wishing to be delivered from Plague and pestilence—namely, the presence of the horrors of these all around them.

Now sudden death is one of the characteristics of the Plague. Defoe and all those who have described it have laid stress on this feature. The Plague was sudden in its onset and sudden in its ending. It was the extremely swift course it ran that so terrified all classes alike. In these circumstances it is not at all remarkable that we should find the prayer to be delivered from 'sudden death' associated with the prayer to be saved from plague and pestilence.

In the first Prayer Book of King Edward VI, printed in March 1549, we can thus perfectly understand why 'lightning and tempest' are mentioned in the same prayer as 'sudden death,' just because they are such pre-eminently sudden occurrences.

In this connexion it is interesting to read in a document, dated July 18, 1551, preserved in the Calendar of State Papers, the phrase 'the extreme plague of sudden death.' It is an order from the King (Edward VI) and his Council to the Bishops commanding them to exhort the people to a diligent attendance at Common Prayer so as to avert the displeasure of Almighty God, who has visited the realm 'with the extreme plague of sudden death'—the very words of the Prayer Book published only two years before. But these measures do not seem to have produced much result, for

Queen Elizabeth, on August 1, 1563, had to appeal directly to the Archbishops of Canterbury and York to give orders for a day of general prayer 'on account of the Plague' (Calendar of State papers, Elizabeth, vol. xxix., 1563, Aug. 1).

The reference to famine in the Litany is equally interesting. The famines of mediaeval England were notorious for severity and frequency. Dr. Creighton, in his scholarly 'History of Epidemics in Britain,' records the occurrence of no fewer than twenty-two great famines in England between A.D. 679 and 1322, or one in about every thirty years. Creighton quotes a well-known proverbial saying of the Middle Ages, '*Anglorum fames, Gallorum ignis, Normannorum lepra*' (Famine for the English, St. Anthony's Fire for the French, and leprosy (or syphilis) for the Normans).

But more than this; besides famines by themselves and pestilences by themselves, there were 'famine-pestilences,' or pestilences accompanying or immediately following upon famines. The pictures of the 'rude plenty' of the tables in the castles of England in the Middle Ages may be true pictures—but of what was in the baron's hall, not of the inside of the cottages. The memories of the famines were quite vivid enough to cause those who composed the Litany to mention them when they were thinking of the pestilences to which they were so closely related. Thus 'famine' comes to be specifically referred to.

Finally, it is interesting to recall that in its long-forgotten origin, the Litany was closely related to pestilence. So far back as A.D. 590 Pope Gregory I, stirred by pestilence that followed on an inundation of the Tiber, ordered the singing of a special Litany, '*litanía septiformis*.' This form of invocation was a hymn-like prayer in which all the following took part—clergy, laity, monks, virgins, matrons, widows, children, and representatives of the poor. The three days before Ascension, Rogation Days, were to be devoted to the chanting of this Litany. Thus when in church we hearing the priest asking to be delivered from lightning, plague, pestilence, and sudden death, instead of fixing our attention on the inapplicability of it to our modern life, we might remember that that prayer was composed some two hundred years before lightning-conductors had been devised, and while as yet the soil of England was soaked with the poison of Plague and its churchyards were overflowing with the bodies of Plague victims.

The Black Death was a sudden death; it was in terms of no metaphor that in 1549 people craved to be delivered from it. Only

sixty years before, the most deadly Sweating Sickness had been a dreadful epidemic in England, so that most of the divines who drew up the Prayer Book of Edward VI could have remembered the first visitation of one of the worst pestilences that ever visited our shores. They had all lived through a reign, that of Henry the Eighth, scarcely a year of which had been free from the Black Death.

It must therefore have been with a peculiar sense of the nearness and the terrible reality of these things that those good men prayed with poignant and personal supplication to be spared a visitation of 'Plague, pestilence, famine, and sudden death.'

D. F. FRASER-HARRIS.

THE LAUNCH OF AN IRONCLAD.

(A MEMORY.)

WITH hearts on fire for their desire, strained eyes and catching breath,

And tightened lips, around the slips we crowd as still as death.
Stand by! stand by! the dogshores fly, loosed by a Royal hand,
O see! O see! She's free! she's free! but ere she leaves the land,
A shudder shakes her mighty frame and towards the lapping cove
She leaps, as mailed Minerva leapt from out the brain of Jove.
Along the ways, beneath our gaze, still faster and more fast,
She rushes irresistible, and strikes the sea at last.
There, like a great sea lioness, the wildly yelping pack
Of billows racing round her she tosses from her track;
Till, every peril past, at last upon the tide she floats,
Superbly, to the thunder of ten thousand British throats.

ALFRED PERCEVAL GRAVES.

THE BATTLE OF KIRKEE.

NOVEMBER 5, 1817.

BY LIEUT.-GENERAL SIR GEORGE MACMUNN, K.C.B.,
K.C.S.I., D.S.O.

'The hawk-winged horse of Damajee,
Mailed squadrons of the Bhao.'

(*With Sindiah to Delhi.*)

I. THE RISE OF MAHARASTHRA.

It has chanced that November the Fifth shall be a day of doings and remembrance within this British domain. Apart from the irony of memory that should make Mr. Guido Fawkes' brilliant idea become the happy feast day of British youth, it has been the date of more than one memorable feat of arms which we also 'remember.' On the Fifth of November, 1854, was fought on the Heights of Inkerman that famous 'soldiers' battle,' when all day long huge grey-coated hordes poured out of Sebastopol, and fell on the small British force that had so rashly set itself down before the fortress.

It appears to be a day famous to small forces who achieve victories, for on that date, 1817, was fought the battle, against huge masses of Mahrattas, the troops of the Peishwa, on the plains of Kirkee hard by the 'Bullock's Hump' at Ganesh-Kind, which once and for all put the question at rest as to the relationship between the Mahrattas and the British amid the ruins of the Turkish Empire of Delhi.

The Mahrattas are one of the most virile of the peoples of Western India, and as a military class their rank and file attained a fame in the old wars which, forgotten during the ages when military thought has been concentrated on the northern races, sprang into the first place again in the Great War. Ethnologically they are largely a Dravidian people mingled with some Aryan Rajput strain, and among them as financiers, counsellors, ministers, but not men of the sword, are the race with the acutest brains perhaps in the whole world, the Brahmins who from time immemorial have settled among the Mahrattas and are known as Mahratta Brahmins.

We may be sure that if India can achieve under a more advanced scale of self-government any stability and success, it is the Mahratta Brahmin who will be most prominent among her public men, though it is said that their mastery of and instinct for intrigue may be their undoing hereafter as in days gone by. But though they have perhaps as a whole always been hostile to British dominion, they have given innumerable faithful officers and lesser servants to the British administration, as the martial classes have given in the army.

This brilliant people have a famous history, and it is well that it should be understood, being germane to the events which led up to that battle on the Guy Fawkes' day which brought the *Pax Britannica* to the sore pressed peasantry of the country-side over which the Mahratta horsemen roamed at will, predatory and rapacious beyond belief.

When I joined at Kirkee as a lad, the officer commanding the artillery was Colonel Holberton, C.B., almost the last of the 'Company's Gunners' in India, who as a lad in the Bombay Artillery had served in the suppression of the Mutiny and concomitant rebellion among the Southern Mahratta tribes. The artillery used to drill, nay do still, on the plain where took place the battle, and close to the Mahratta College of Science. The Principal of the College forty years ago had written to Colonel Holberton to know by what authority he manœuvred his batteries so close to his precious college, and the colonel had returned the laconic and to our minds delightful answer, 'Authority, Battle of Kirkee, November 5, 1817.' The point was not susceptible of further argument.

But before we come to the battle it will be well to see how it came about, for the history of the times is a perplexing one, not readily understood of anyone except the determined reader. The story in brief is this. It opens in the prime of the Mogul Empire. Baber and his great son Akhbar had come and gone, and the three emperors with the sonorous titles had reigned. The Mogul had no name, for names were lost in the titles when they came to the throne.

Listen to them, singing to themselves as they go, and get the deep cadences right: *Jēhāngīr*,¹ the World Grasper; *Shah Jēhān*, the King of Creation; *Ālāmgīr*, the Holder of the Universe, good

¹ 'Gir'—is pronounced 'geer.'

deep-sounding Persian. The last of the three, *Ālāmgīr*, curiously enough is better known by his own name Aurungzeb, the masterful, the conscientious, the fanatical. When Aurungzeb ruled in the seat of his fathers the Mogul Empire was at its zenith—the last of the Turkish or Tartar dominations of India—yet a cloud no bigger than a man's hand was forming in the west. That cloud was the Mahratta youth Sivaji, son of Shaji, a Hindu general of horse in the employ of the Moslem kings of the Deccan. Sivaji fought his Moslem neighbours and then raided into the administered Mogul dominions. At last Aurungzeb accepted him as the Rajah of Sattara in the mountains around Poona.

As the Mogul Empire began to totter from its own size and badly pinned weight, Sivaji, now in alliance with and now in contest with the imperial governors, became the darling of all western Hinduism, which groaned under Moslem rule, and the hero of every troubadour lay. After adventures of great romance he was firmly established as the leader and ruler of large Hindu tracts, both mountain and plain. But Sivaji's descendants could not rise to the power and might bequeathed them. Very soon they dwindled into sacred puppets in the hands of the Brahmin prime minister, who controlled the other Mahratta chiefs in the name of the ruling family. This soon passed into a confederacy of the principal Mahratta leaders, all of whom had carved a principality out of the decay of the Empire, and who recognised the Peishwa or minister at Poona as their head. That headship was soon to be accepted as hereditary, and from this grew the series of Peishwas which finally faded into history, in the aftermath of the Mutiny, amid the snow of the Himalayas. Dundoo Punt the Nana, the adopted son of the last of the Peishwas, came into the picture of the Mutiny because it chanced that Baji Rao, the last of the Peishwas, had passed away as a pensioner at Bithoor, close to Cawnpore.

The Fatal Field of Panipat.

‘Ho ! Anand Ram Nimbalkar,
Ride ! Get rid of Mulhar Rao.’

(With Sindiah to Delhi.)

The kingdom left by Sivaji in the early days of the Peishwa was taking shape on the best of the ancient Hindu traditions, that of a semi-sacred Royal House which reigned and did not govern, and the power in the hands of an hereditary minister. To this

day we see the same in Nepal, which is an independent Hindu kingdom of Rajput origin, and we have seen it in Peking. We have the same tradition on the chess-board. The piece that we call the Queen, in the East is known as the Vizier, the minister with all the power, who protects an impotent ruler from a hustling world. Even the constitutional monarchy which we, another Aryan people, have evolved approaches the same form. There are few autocrats with greater power in unwritten law than a British Prime Minister with a strong majority. And so for a while was the Peishwa, the hereditary minister of the family of Sivaji, with his myriad horsemen behind him.

With the death of Aurungzeb *Ālāmgīr*, in the first decade of the eighteenth century, when Good Queen Anne reigned in Merrie England, the Mogul Empire tottered of its own weight and Aurungzeb's *bêtises*, and so early as 1719 ten thousand Mahrattas rode to Delhi to bear a hand in king-making. Under the Peishwa's rule the strongest among the Mahratta leaders came to the front, simple rough horse soldiers getting their brain power from their Brahmin counsellors. Among the foremost were Ranaji Sindiah, a slipper-bearer of the Peishwa, known affectionately, as his descendants are still, as the *Patel* or headman, Mulhar Rao Holkar, the horseman of the village of Hol, and Pilaji Gaikwar the cowherd.

By 1736 the forces of the confederacy appeared again at Delhi, dreaming of establishing once more that Hindu Empire whose knell had first been sounded by Mahmud of Ghuzni, the Turk, seven hundred years before, and there the drama of disruption begins. The threatened Emperor summons his agent, the Nizam of the Deccan, the famous Asaf Jah, to his aid. But Asaf Jah, though relieving the pressure for the moment, is himself surrounded by the mountain rats at Bhopal and comes to an agreement with them, giving up the governorship of Malwa which the Mogul had just conferred on him. This vast province, Sindhia and Holkar proceed to share among themselves, and the Confederacy becomes the most important power in India. In 1739 the Mahrattas break the Portuguese, capturing the spired and convented Basein.

The next year the second of the Peishwas, Baji Rao I, died. Two years later the Mahrattas exact from the Nawab of Bengal his licence to collect *Chauth* over the whole of Bengal, Behar and Orissa, the which was obviously destined to bring them into trouble with the British. In 1748 died Sahu, the grandson of Sivaji, and with him even the pretence of a royal family. Poona became the

capital of the Confederacy. And while the Mahratta power waxed, that of the Mogul waned.

In 1738 Nadir Shah, the Turk from Persia, occupied Delhi and heavily mulcted Muhammad Shah, his brother Turk, including the reft of his peacock throne, a blow enough to ruin any empire. To this was to be added later the invasion of Ahmed Shah, the Afghan, to whom had come by right of lapse and seizure the Afghan portion of Nadir Shah's empire.

Now the Mahrattas again appear at the imperial capital. In 1756 Ahmed Shah seized Lahore, and the Mogul prime minister called in the Confederacy, with the result that Raghoba the Peishwa's brother soon rules in Delhi and is rash enough to drive Ahmed Shah's governor from Lahore and instal a Mahratta in his stead. Ahmed Shah, thus flouted, returned with all the chivalry of Central Asia at his side. Fearing the pretensions of the Mahratta to revive a Hindu empire, the Nawab of Oudh and the Rohillas favour the Afghans, whose kinsmen many of them were. On the other hand, all the horsemen of the Bhao and of the Deccan ride hard for Delhi, and once again the fate of India is fought out on the famous plain of Panipat north of Delhi. By the Black Mango-tree that had endured for generations, on January 17, 1761, the Afghans gain a sweeping victory, the greater portion of the Mahratta force, with the flower of their chivalry, being destroyed.

The news flashed through India, and all Hindudom stood dismayed. It came first far down the land by that mysterious intelligence service of the bankers, and it ran in this dramatic guise, like to the news of Flodden in its pathos. 'Three pearls of great price have been dissolved, twenty-four gold *mohrs* lost, and the silver and copper cannot be counted.'

Thus passed any real hope of succeeding to the throne of the Moguls, though later attempts were to follow. Nevertheless the Mahrattas were still the most powerful state of confederacy in the land, but while they were recuperating from the effects of Panipat, the British power was growing steadily, and a *modus vivendi* with the confederate chiefs soon became a political necessity. By 1769 the latter had recovered to a great extent from Panipat, and Sindiah moved to Delhi, as the rise of the Sikh *Misls* curbed the danger from the Afghans. Shah Alam II, the Mogul Emperor, who had fled from the Afghans and was residing close to the British at Allahabad, returned to Delhi and placed himself in Sindiah's

hands, making the latter Commander-in-Chief of the imperial forces, and thenceforward Sindiah acted as the vicegerent of the puppet Emperor. From thence to 1800 the British had various doings with the Mahrattas, sometimes friendly, sometimes hostile, but always aiming at some convention which would keep the peace in Hindustan. During this period the officers of the defunct French regime, and refugees from the French Revolution were training the armies of the Indian princes in the manner of Europe, Sindiah especially having a European cadre modelled on British lines.

In the Deccan the British had finally disposed of Tippu, Sultan of Mysore, the upstart free-lance dynasty which had so long opposed them from the throne of a dispossessed Hindu prince, and were more than ever determined to find some solution to the disorder which existed under the Mahrattas. These chiefs of the Confederacy were quarrelling among themselves. The Peishwa had put to death Holkar's brother under circumstances of terrible cruelty, dragging him shrieking to execution, chained to an elephant's foot. Holkar advanced on Poona, with three British adventurers commanding his forces; he defeated three miles from the city at Harapsar the joint forces of Sindiah with their French officers and the Peishwa, and the latter fled to the protection of the British at Bassein. During this battle a British subsidiary force cantoned at Poona remained neutral, since the Peishwa had neglected to provide the money for its maintenance.

This event furthered Lord Mornington's policy and his resolution to bring the Mahrattas to reason. A treaty with the Peishwa was entered into, whereby the British would restore him to his throne, and General Wellesley advances from the Deccan to do so. Sindiah and the Bhonsla, the Mahratta chief of Nagpur, decide to oppose him and bring the remnant of the Mogul power into the struggle, as well as their own. This calls for a supreme British effort, and General Lake, the Commander-in-Chief, advances also from the Ganges. Then follow in quick succession the victories of Assaye, Laswarree, Argaum, and Delhi, with the storming of several fortresses. The now blinded Emperor is rescued from his contumely in Mahratta hands and pensioned. Baji Rao II is restored to his throne and the chiefs make peace on Lord Mornington's terms. In quick succession, however, follows the third Mahratta war, when Holkar, who had held aloof, obtains a victory over a British detachment and endeavours to retake Dehli. General Lake again sets his army in motion and chases Holkar

back to Malwa, endeavouring to capture the Jât city of Bhurtpur, which has joined Holkar, but fails. Peace, however, is made, and by 1805 the British, everywhere victorious, see some promise of finality for the future. But the Marquis Wellesley, as Lord Mornington has now become, went home. Sir John Shore, the new Governor-General, with a Court of Directors, appalled at the vision of power handed them by Lord Wellesley, let the situation fall away again, so that it soon became necessary to go the same road once more. And this brings us to the great events in 1817, which settled the matter once and for all.

II. THE BATTLE OF KIRKEE.

Disorder prevailed for the Mahrattas could not keep the Peace.

For generations they had carried on their licensed system of plunder, demanding the *Charuth* or fourth part of the revenue, and had even reached to the walls of Calcutta and of Fort St. George at Madras. It was hardly to be expected that the squires and barons and leaders of horse who marched under their banners could speedily acquiesce in the *Pax Britannica*, especially when the strong policy of Wellesley was relaxed. Moreover, there had long been growing up on the banks of the Nerbudda and around the hill fastnesses in Central India, an Alsatian coterie of free-lance bands, relics of Mogul horse, expatriated Rohillas with tribal connections in Central Asia, and all the derelict fighting men that the dying of such a system as the Mogul Empire has seen produced in many lands.

From the Nerbudda, in the winter season, these hordes, known as Pindaris, would sally forth to rob, to rape, and to murder, and would attach themselves to any of the big Mahratta chiefs who would have them, or who would plunder on their own. For hundreds of miles the countryside called to High Heaven for relief from their atrocious cruelties and exactions. The Mahratta chiefs took no steps to suppress them, indeed openly intrigued with them in the hope of once again trying a decision with the British for the paramountcy of Hindustan. Once again the Governor-General, now Lord Moira, better known by his soldier name in the American War of Independence as Francis Rawdon, had to set armies in motion from the south and the east and the west, to put an end to the robber hordes on the Nerbudda, and he called on his Mahratta allies to support him.

Under Lord Wellesley's policy the Mahratta chiefs received subsidiary British forces to help prevent the internecine attacks which had so long ensued between Mahratta and Mahratta, and Mahratta and Nizam. The commencement of the Pindari war saw the Bhonsla and the Peishwa treacherously attack their subsidiary forces. Together with Holkar they then joined the Pindaris; the faithless Baji Rao played into every hand, but used heaven and earth to set the whole confederacy going against the British, by whose help alone he held his throne. It is not the purpose of this paper to follow the military story of the campaign. The medal 'To the Army of India,' which bears the clasps for Wellesley's and Lake's great battles, also carries several for this series of wars.

The 'Defence of Seetabaladi' and 'Seetabuldi' commemorate the attacks by the Bhonsla on his Resident and escort, 'Kirkee and Poona,' and 'Coregaum' the Peishwa's attempts, while at 'Mehidpur' the army of Holkar was destroyed.

But the dramatic story which is to be told here is that of the events which led to the battle of Kirkee, and the attempts made by the Peishwa to 'do the dirty' on his friends. It was this victory that resulted in the abolition of the Peishwa, and the annexation of Poona and its country, and it is therefore the outstanding feature of the story, made the more interesting because of the romantic setting in which the Peishwa's capital lies. With the battle the modern history of Western India begins, and the settlement with the other chiefs which has endured, with one exception, to this day.

For many years there had been direct relations with the Peishwa, and from 1785 a British Resident had been deputed to his court. The Resident dwelt at the *Sungam*, a junction of the Moola and the Moota rivers, which wind in an intricate manner round Poona, and a spot famous for its beauty and amenities. The Peishwa's capital lies on the opposite bank, a mass of tiled roofs and temple spires with the green background of the Ghats behind, steep rugged mountains, which to the right attain a rugged height where stands the ancient Moslem fortress of Singhar, and which then was a Mahratta stronghold. The country to-day is amply wooded, but a century or so ago was far less so. Far and near in the mountains round, ancient Moslem and Mahratta forts frown down on every pass and trade route. From the 'nineties onward a subsidiary force, paid for by the Peishwa, but organised by the British, was stationed at Garpir outside the city. This force had not taken

part in the battle of Harapsar already referred to, when Holkar beat the combined force of Sindiah and the Peishwa. After Wellesley had replaced the Peishwa on his throne in 1803, a regular British force had moved into Garpir in support of the latter, and the subsidiary force had moved to Dapooree, a site some four miles north of the *Sungam* on the left bank of the Moota, which curls right back and here runs in the opposite direction to that when it joins the Moola.

All 1817 the Peishwa had been intriguing to induce the other Mahratta chiefs to resist the British plans for exterminating the Pindari evil and generally to combine in conjunction with the Pindaris against the British in one more attempt to dominate India. The work of the Marquis Wellesley had not been finished off, and it now seemed likely to go again.

The British force at Poona was under very much the same conditions as to this day holds at Secunderabad, where a large British force dwells close to the Nizam's capital of Hyderabad, placed there originally for his protection. It consisted, in the autumn of 1817, of the 2/1st, 2/6th, and 1/7th Bombay Infantry with six light guns, to which had lately been added the Bombay European Infantry from Bombay, sent at the request of Mr. Elphinstone, the Resident, who was fully aware of the Peishwa's actions, and had especially grown apprehensive at the large number of Mahratta troops which were gathering in the vicinity of Poona.

The Garpir cantonment was in a singularly indefensible position, and would have been abandoned earlier for some better spot, had not the Resident feared to precipitate a crisis which after all might yield to reason and expostulation. It should be noticed that this factor, while often leading to the passing of a crisis, has more than once induced a grave disaster when the bluff has failed—but then our Empire in India has risen often enough on sheer bluff so far as fighting has been concerned.

The forces now assembled on the Bambudra plain between the 'Bullock's Hump' and the Moola were vast. They were under the command of one Gokla, who had at one time commanded Mahratta auxiliary horse under Wellesley, with several *Panj-hazaris*¹ of horse under Moro Dixit and Vinchorla and other Mahratta leaders, and several of the Peishwa's regular battalions, with some European training and a large mass of guns.

By the 5th of November it was evident that the crisis had

¹ Panj-hazaris—a corps of 5000.

arrived. Mr. Elphinstone, who represented the supreme government, now directed Colonel Burr of the Bombay Europeans, who commanded the force, to move out to Kirkee village, crossing the joint Moola-Moota river by the ford near Yellora, and then make for Holkar's Bridge over the Moola, and thence to the knoll on which stood the little village. While Burr was establishing himself here, Vinchorla brought his horse to swarm round the Residency in a threatening manner. The Resident determined to join Colonel Burr at once, but could not pass by the direct route and was compelled to cross the Moola by the ford near his garden and recross by Holkar's Bridge. With him went his escort, some 250 bayonets of Bengal Infantry. By 4 P.M. he was with the force at Kirkee.

It is on record that the colonel, though a staunch old soldier, was somewhat past his prime. Elphinstone, who had been the political officer with Wellesley, was a man of ability and enterprise and was a goad in his side. That pernicious interference of the political officer with the soldier, which at one time was so bitterly resented and was carried to such absurd lengths, was no doubt often the result of the advanced age at which the Company's officers attained command.

The Mahratta force, Elphinstone considered, would only become more dangerous for every hour it was allowed to defy the British. Four of the afternoon of the Deccan autumn day was the best of all hours to start a fight so far as temperature went. There would be two and a half hours of daylight, and he judged that a determined front and an advance would at any rate diminish the Mahratta ardour.

The force with Colonel Burr now consisted of one European and three regular native battalions, and six light guns, as well as the Resident's escort. At Dapuri, waiting under arms, was the subsidiary force, under Captain Forde, two more weak battalions, and four more light guns. All the artillery was in bullock draught. The 2/6th Bombay Infantry, less its flank companies, was left entrenched at the village with two of Colonel Burr's guns and the kit. The rest of the force advanced in line south-west towards the Bullock's Hump, on both sides of which could be seen the Mahratta camps with a long line of guns in action, both right and left of the Hump. Behind them lay a brown range of flat-topped hills; beyond, the great range of the Ghats and the fortress of Singhar.

The line consisted of the 2/7th Bombay Infantry on the left,

then the Bengal Detachment, and the European Regiment in the centre, with the 2/1 Bombay Infantry on the right. On both flanks were two guns. At the same time, Captain Forde was ordered to cross the Moota and join the right of the British as they advanced.

The line now moved forward in this order over the open plain, in full view of the Mahrattas, for about a mile, and then brought up its left shoulder to a halt in the open somewhere in the position of the present Kirkee race-course. By this time Forde's battalions were approaching, and large bodies of cavalry moved forward from the Mahratta position. A great mass under Moro Dixit, Captain Forde's friend,¹ bore down on his battalions, which hastily formed front to their right. The charge was repulsed, Moro Dixit being hit by a shot laid, it was said, by Forde himself.

It is said that the Peishwa, always irresolute, and who had been upset by the ill-omened breaking of the shaft of the *Juri Phatka*, or the yellow standard of the Confederacy, was watching affairs from the Hill of Parbutti, and had ordered Gokla to refrain from commencing the battle. But he was too late. The Mahrattas were surging and excited, and the horse were already fully committed. Their infantry now advanced, while large bodies of horse had left them behind and were threatening the British left. A regular Mahratta battalion under the command of a Major De Pinto appeared in the scrub and gardens on the British left, and the 2/7th broke the line in their anxiety to close with them. Gokla, who was apparently a vigilant commander, seeing this, himself led a body of 6000 horse into the gap, his guns ceasing fire as he flung this force against the right flank of the 7th. Stout old Colonel Burr, who had formerly commanded the 7th, hurried to the battalion's side and placed himself by their colours. There is no voice like that of a former colonel to steady a native corps. His two orderlies were shot at his side and his horse wounded, while a bullet went through his own shako. Thus encouraged, the 7th withstood the storm and beat off the cavalry, who had, moreover, got involved in the muddy bottom of one of the small ravines which intersected the plain. Gokla's horse was killed under him, and the charge had failed. The horse swept on and round the red line and rallying squares, and then flew off to attack the village of Kirkee, where they were also repulsed. While this was in progress, a body of 3000 Arabs and Gosains moved down against the British right but were beaten off by the 1st Bombay Infantry.

¹ Captain Forde was on intimate terms with many Mahratta chiefs.

With the failure of this attack the Mahrattas began to drive off their guns, and the day was over. The British line reformed and took post on the higher part of the plain to their front, and bivouacked on the field. Next day troops from Sirur marched in, and seven days later the British, now commanded by Brigadier-General Smith, advanced against the Mahratta force which was holding a line covering Poona from the direction of the Yellora ford and what is now the Bund Bridge. The Mahrattas are defeated with little loss and make off for the open country by the Babdeo Ghat and for Singhar. Several guns are captured by a party of British horse at the foot of the high hills.

While these events are in progress, somewhat similar happenings have occurred at Nagpur. A little later Baji Rao endeavours to destroy a small British force moving into Poona from Sirur, at the ever memorable fight of Coregaum. The Bhonsla attacks the Resident and his escort on Seetabuldi Hill, and is eventually defeated by the arrival of the army of the Deccan at the Battle of Seetabuldi. Sindiah, perhaps by the wise advice of the Resident at his court, 'King' Collins, of happy memory, abstains from breaking his treaty. Holkar must needs catch the war fever, and his forces are smashed at the Battle of Mehidpur. Then follows the breaking up of the Pindari hordes in central India and the hunting of the lawless *lashkars* of Mahratta horse, a long and weary but fascinating drama. At last, in 1819, it comes to an end, Holkar and the Nagpur rajah make peace on British terms. The evil and forsworn Raj of the Peishwa is brought to an end, and his territory annexed. Baji Rao and his horse are hunted till he surrenders and ends his life a pensioner near Cawnpore.

Long and weary as were the operations, it is the defeat at Kirkee of the massed Mahratta forces which sounded the knell of Mahratta power. Had Colonel Burr been overwhelmed, Sindiah could hardly have held to his treaty, and risings might have extended to every direction. Kirkee was the turning-point. The Rajah of Sattara was reinstated in a small principality, and to this day the agreements with Holkar and Sindiah and the Gaikwar remain. The Bhonsla's territory was annexed by Lord Dalhousie just before the Mutiny for want of an heir, and the family of the Peishwa disappeared with his adopted son, the Nana, after '57.

But to this day the people of the Deccan will tell you that you can hear o' nights the tramp of the myriad horse of Baji Rao in their restless sweep of the countryside.

THE SILVER WEDDING.

BY F. H. DORSET.

'WELL,' said Mrs. Hoblin decisively, 'you married me!'

'You needn't remind me of that!' said Mr. Hoblin, shutting the door between shop and living-room with an abruptness which left him in secure possession of the last word; having done which he dived head foremost at a box of seed potatoes behind the counter and began sorting them with hot, trembling fingers.

Mr. Hoblin was angry, a condition not unusual with him during twenty-five years of matrimonial bickering. It might be said that Mr. Hoblin's anger was a hardy perennial which survived all other emotions with evergreen invariableness; an unobtrusive plant as a rule, but occasionally shaken, as now, by a rustling gale of annoyance. Mr. Hoblin was a man with a grievance against life, a grievance whom he had just left ironing his shirt on the living-room table, by name, Rosemary.

'Rosemary for remembrance,' thought Mr. Hoblin, 'as if she ever give me a chance of fergittin' her! Silver weddin' an' all, d— her!'

He straightened his back and looked about the little shaded shop with jaundiced eyes. A yellowish light filled it, percolating through lowered blinds, for it was early closing day and now two o'clock of an April afternoon. His mind reverted to the same hour twenty-five years previously. 'Fool, I was!' muttered Mr. Hoblin, stooping again to scramble among the potatoes like the shaggy round-shouldered terrier he resembled; 'but if Henry'd let us alone I wouldn't ha' done it. His pig-headed way o' warnin' me got my goat, it did, and I went and done it more to spite him than anythin' else. And now I got to pay for it.'

It occurred to him that perhaps he had already a little overpaid the account. The grocery business was his wife's in actuality, his by courtesy. She held the purse-strings with a grip inherited from a line of forbears who had wrested substantial respectability from stubborn soil, while her husband was virtually in much the same financial position to-day as he had been when he ironically endowed her with his worldly goods, which same had consisted of a deal chest of drawers and five pounds in a new leather wallet.

Rosemary Hoblin—before her marriage, Rosemary Pike—was one of the only two surviving children of a prosperous small farmer, whose death had placed his son Henry in possession of the farm and made his daughter mistress of a dowry of several hundred pounds. Miss Pike, ignoring obvious swains, set her affection upon a mere penniless labourer, son of penniless labourers, and proposed to him with Leap Year determination. Henry, raising strenuous opposition to his sister's desires, fanned the errant flame of passion in the lady's breast and that of startled obstinacy in the breast of Joel Hoblin. Finally Joel hammered the obstructor flat on the village green and took his bride churchward with the air of a strong man snatching fortune from the knees of the gods. Henry Pike, bathing a gory nose, stated in set terms that he washed his hands of all further responsibility in the matter, and hoped that Rosemary herself would get the next hammering. And the curious thing was that Rosemary didn't, for in the tribe Hoblin wife-beating had once been something of a fine art.

Joel Hoblin never beat his wife, even though her tongue grew daily sharper, her black eyes beady with acquisitiveness, her figure flatter and more angular with the passage of years, and her efficiency in all things practical more and more trying to the happy-go-lucky gipsy strain in his dusky blood. Himself he could not have told you why. He endured, he growled, occasionally, as to-day, he quarrelled with bitter, trenchant words, but he had never struck her, and also he never left her. He worked by her side, selling groceries and cultivating his garden and nursing his very grievances with jealous pride.

But to-day he told himself that he was sick of it, and that Rosemary could choose which she'd keep, himself or her brother. Come what may, he would not share a roof with Henry Pike, and if Henry had chosen to mismanage his patrimony and go bankrupt his sister could have him and welcome, but she should not have himself too.

Once again he paused in his task, and stood, with the half-sorted potatoes at his feet, regarding his immediate surroundings with new attention. He looked at the neat counter, its ends adorned with cunningly stacked specimen pots of jam, tinned meat, honey, and kindred comestibles. He looked at the shelves beside him; the large canisters of tea, coffee and sugar, the packets of spice, rice, and starch, custard powder, cocoa, bottles of sauce, and bags of self-raising flour. All these things and the money just cleared

from the till and lodged in the domestic safe were Rosemary's. He received an allowance, and yet . . . if he had not been able to bring capital into the business he had brought his brute strength and his intelligence. His wife might keep the accounts, but it was he who hauled the heavy crates, unpacked, sorted, and chiefly sold; he who had really made the shop pay and prevented Rosemary's conservative tendencies from clipping her enterprise. The business had grown from a mere front-room affair into the glory of shop-window and motor-delivery van under his care, and it served quite a fair-sized country district, in spite of rival stores in the local market town. He ought to be an equal partner in all profits, and if he'd had any pluck, communed Mr. Hoblin with himself, he *would* have been by now. He'd let himself be hen-pecked; and yet, when he sometimes tacked homeward from the 'Bear' shaking his head and growling as he walked, every wise man in the village gave him a wide berth and let him alone. Why had he never been able to subdue Rosemary?

'Beatin' wouldn't 'a done it,' he mused. 'I dunno what it is about her. Twenty-five year, and 'atin' each other like pison nearly all the time! And yet us sticks together; 'tis as if her sucked the gumption out of I. But I ain't 'avin' no more of it, not if I 'as to kill her. I'll swing for her one day if she carries on much more like she done to-day. And it's 'Enry or me, not both on us, in this 'ouse. I ain't 'avin' two bosses, and me a man o' bones and blood!'

The neat shop was very quiet, full of that subdued light. It seemed to him suddenly very small and the prison of all his hopes. He had come in to collect potatoes for the plot he had just prepared, but the plot itself, the very garden upon which he expended so much energy and interest, the dark soil whose broken, sweet-smelling surface had so often soothed his troubled senses into temporary peace, was hers. He had been her slave, her right hand, her subordinate always. But they had no children, and if Rosemary went first he inherited.

'Her'll outlive I,' he mused bitterly; 'when I be wore out and so toothless as me grandmam her'll be goin' strong, and thumpin' on the table with that damned flat-iron so hard as ever.'

From beyond the glass-topped muslin-muffled door of the living-room he heard the said thumping cease momentarily, to recommence as Mrs. Hoblin began operations on his second flannel shirt. Joel dropped the potatoes in his hands back into their box

unsorted, wiped his fingers on his corduroy gardening breeches, tip-toed quietly round the counter and across the shop, and let himself out by the blinded shop-door. Turning to the right, he strode quickly away in the direction of the heathy moorland which rose, dappled green upon brown with young fern and yellow with early gorse, all around the village. Here had his tinker-ancestry wandered, poaching covert after covert in the folded elbows of the hills, and here he, too, was sometimes free and at one with the origins of his birth. Of sentiment and imagination Joel Hoblin might have little, but earth and earth-creatures he understood with primeval kinship of spirit, and to them in moments of stress he sometimes escaped. Instinct warned him now to hasten if he would be free, and sure enough a glance backward as he struck up a heathery cart-track to the moor apprised him that Rosemary had followed him to the shop doorstep and was waving him to return. Joel clenched his fists in the pockets of his loose jacket, and struck out silently for the heath. When well out of signalling range he slowed down and spoke aloud to the choir of larks above him.

'If I lives ter dig her grave,' he asseverated, 'I'll dig un deep. Help saxon I will, and show him how some folks ought ter be planted. Twal' foot deep, and a fair solid cement'y tomb atop of 'em, that'll give 'em summat ter do gettin' up at th' last day!'

This reflection relieved him, but still some little time passed before he was calm enough to draw forth pipe and pouch and prepare to smoke. Even then he thrust his filled pipe between his teeth and left it unkindled until a hollow in the moor led him down to a clump of brushwood and the flat stump of a long-felled ash tree beside a tiny stream which here sprang into murmuring existence among the tussocks. He seated himself upon the stump, and fell suddenly into one of those immovable complete stillnesses which mark the true child of earth, a faculty common to the field-mouse and the tiger. With unlit pipe in mouth he sat, waiting, watching, and listening for such small doings of the heathy world as might creep into his ken. His action was unintentional and instinctive; a rebound from the anger inspired by human company into the still secrecy of nature.

A myriad minute sounds told their tale to his accustomed perceptions, and presently, from amid the bushes, came clamour of small angry bird-voices and a breaking forth of two feathered bundles of tiny fury.

Two chaffinches, but not two cock-birds, as at first he fancied;

two perhaps ill-assorted mates, settling some dispute with beak and claw in most unusual, unseemly birdland affray. Joel watched them with eyes which alone of all his bulky body moved, glistening with interest.

The little hen was a virago, and she was being punished with merciless severity. He watched her defiance, at first hysterical, feminine, abusive, then dogged, silent, deadly in its impotence to defend itself, lastly, weak, yet still persistent; and then it dawned upon him that here, in this spring-enchanted cup of budding Hawthorn and tinkling watercourse was tragedy, wife-murder, which perhaps he might avert. But he did not move. Only when a pitiful heap of bleeding feathers lay inert on an open patch of grass did his sudden uprising send the small and not undamaged murderer fluttering into the underbrush.

'You done it, me beauty,' said Joel Hoblin, addressing the now invisible criminal. 'You done it, and what a bird can do a man can do . . . if he's keeful.'

He lit his pipe and rose, turned his back upon the death-bed of folly, and rambled on over the upland thinking deeply; and now not the observant son of the soil but the quick-minded imprisoned Romany was uppermost in this badger-figured man. A great-grandmother had left the Romany tents for a tinkers' van and a man of mixed blood; a grandmother, black-eyed and wild of spirit, had brought strange elements of passion and secrecy and discord from the tinkers' van into a shelter of thatched eaves and the life of a day-labourer. Joel's own mother had passed from thatch to slate, and the weight of Hoblin fists, with queer secrets in her heart; possibilities never fulfilled in her suppressed life, but rising now in the shrewder soul of her son. Joel Hoblin thought with purpose and precision.

There were many ways by which a certain thing might be done, and done without detection. There need, surely, be no scattering of tell-tale feathers on an open greensward.

Joel walked slowly now, all his attention turned inward to that dark chamber of his soul where dwelt ghosts of the black acts of many untamed generations. For the best part of an hour he tramped the upland while within that secret chamber the glowing fire of his hate lit now one, now another of its furnishings. The desire to kill was upon him, to kill quickly, quietly, immediately, and somehow with artistry, so that he might afterwards sit cross-legged among the possessions which he had helped to acquire and

smile sardonically at an ignorant world. No clumsy dealing for Joe Hoblin ! He knew the brute in himself, that brute which loved giving of blows and the swift exhilaration of a gory fight with fellow-man ; but when it came to dealing with women then something subtler yielded better satisfaction. He wished, fiercely, that he could have known fully the mind of his grandmother, with its dim stores of secret lore, before she became a paralytic old wreck well on in the nineties, who now lay speechlessly surviving Joel's own parents. He wished, also, that he had considered all this earlier, and so perhaps have avoided many years of increasing discord.

Presently he arrived at a decision, a choice of place. It would need care, exactitude, but given these it would present to all outer observation the undoubted appearance of accident. He halted to wipe a face heated by walking over rough ground in warm sunshine, then he turned about and began to retrace his steps at a freshly quickened pace, until, climbing back out of the dingle by the stream, he encountered a man walking hurriedly towards him. He stood still, and regarded the newcomer with a grin of unwelcome.

The approaching man was tall, aged about fifty, loose-limbed, clad in leather leggings, heavy boots, and rough tweed ; very obviously of the genus farmer. His clothes were well-worn but well-kept, and at first sight he might easily have passed for a man of solid status. Joel knew better, and waited for him with undisguised contempt.

' Well, Henry ? ' he challenged, as the other drew near.

Henry Pike removed his cap and, like Joel, wiped a heated forehead, yet he looked pale and more as if his sweat was cold than hot. Bankruptcy had hit Henry hard ; he knew that he had muddled his affairs badly, but the policy of an erratic Government served nowadays to bewilder and ruin many more small farmers beside himself, and Henry had long been a man daunted by circumstances. But he had always managed to raise such shillings as an empty whisky flask required for its replenishment, and that fact had written itself about his eyes and mouth. The hand which wiped his brow trembled, and Joe, for a second, looked sharply at the shirt-cuff its wrist revealed.

' Well, Henry ? ' he repeated. ' What be *you* arter ? Chivyin' I, eh ? '

Pike smiled uncertainly.

' In a manner of speaking, yes,' he admitted. ' I've been out for a walk, and I meant to look in on you and Rosemary for a cup

o' tea before I went home. But I caught sight on you, so I came along to meet you. Maybe we'll walk back together ?'

'Be you,' said Joel bluntly, 'thinkin' o' livin' along of we now ye're sold up to-morrer ? Her've got that idee fixed in her head. I been tellin' of her ter take it out agin and fling 'n away, for I ain't standin' fer it.'

Pike glanced at him sideways between reddened eyelids, and under a greyish drooping moustache ran a red tongue along white lips.

'I'd not be trespassin' long on your hospitality, Joel,' he said quietly; 'I'll be away after a job as soon as may be. But I'm bound to stop here awhile first, and who should I go to if not my own sister ?'

'All the job *you'll* ever look for will be the job o' raisin' drinks,' replied Joel. Then he laughed more genially. 'Well,' he said, 'us'll house 'ee fer a month, and arter then her can have you or me, but her won't have both. You can have my place, an' welcome, and I wish 'ee joy o' your two hands and your heart in doin' o' my jobs. Sweated for her, I have, but now I'll be done wi' it. What's wrong with 'ee, man ? You be all of a tremble like.'

'I think,' said Henry Pike uncertainly, 'that I've a return of influenza. I've been queer all day and came out to see if I could—blow away . . . cobwebs. But now I'll be glad o' tea.'

'Tain't tea you wants,' observed Joel drily. 'But you won't get nobbut tea outer Rosemary. Come along, then.'

They began to walk back down along the cart track to the village. Once or twice Henry stumbled, as though uncertain of his feet, and Joel watched him narrowly. There was something very queer about Henry to-day; something not altogether due either to whisky or influenza. A frightened man was Henry, and what of ? speculated Joel Hoblin. Not of mere bankruptcy, surely ! What ghost, then, haunted Henry Pike and made him look fearfully before him and stumble ?

Joel removed his pipe and stowed it into his pocket.

'Be'est seein' things, Henry ?' he asked pleasantly.

'Eh ?' His brother-in-law started and stiffened.

'Whisky-bugs ?' queried Joel. 'You be starin's if you seed summat what skeered 'ee. Well, Rosemary 'll cure 'ee, no doubt.'

'No,' asserted Henry, with sudden firmness. He squared his shoulders. 'Influenza,' he reiterated, 'and trouble of mind. You've made a success of your business, and I am a failure.'

'Maybe,' said Joel, 'but Rosemary 'll larn 'ee to make good when you be like me, her slave. Eh, yes! I think I've a mind to yield 'ee my place and go my own ways agin, could I but draa the moneys I've earned for she. You warned me, Henry—if you'd said less maybe I'd have heeded you; if you'd kept her to the farm you'd be no bankrupt to-day. Her'd a seen to that!'

Henry nodded. His pallor seemed to increase as they drew near the shop, which stood strategically at the very entrance to the village. Suddenly he chuckled with an hysterical note in his voice. 'Early closin' day, and shop-blinds all down, Joel,' he said. 'Don't she hate a lost half-day! Those blinds look like a death in the house, I always think.'

Joel gave no answer save a quick flicker of the eyes. He nodded greeting to a couple of familiar pedestrians and noticed covertly that Henry on the hard high road regained suddenly some of his usual self-assurance and was flushed over his pallor; seemed, indeed, inclined to hurry. Joel's mouth settled into its grimmest lines. He knew Henry; a weak man, nowadays, apart from his sister; not over-fond of her, yet, in her company, always once again tight knit and pulled together, and always seeking her company, as though in her only he had hope in life. Rosemary, despising him, loved him with grasping affection, dictatorial and demonstrative. She had even threatened to alter her will, making him heir to all her property, unless Joel consented to giving him permanent house-room. Henry must, therefore, so Joel now perceived, take up his abode with them for a while. Rosemary herself must be the actual one of the trio to depart, without time for any alteration of her testamentary dispositions, and under circumstances unsuspicious.

The two men did not enter by the shop, which Rosemary had re-bolted. Passing down the alley-way between a stable wall and the house, they reached the backdoor, Henry going first and raising the latch. They entered the scullery, damp and flagged, with a sink like a stone sarcophagus, wiped their boots on a rough mat, and proceeded towards the living-room via a neat kitchen and the width of a little passage. Silence possessed the ground floor, which suggested that Rosemary had gone upstairs to tidy herself, having finished her ironing. In the kitchen there were no preparations for tea, and the fire had sunk low. Joel noted these things as they passed on their way.

'Cross she be, to-day, old chap,' he said; 'maybe us'll have

to get our own tea. Sounds like she'd gone out if her b'aint upstairs.'

The man walking before him shivered involuntarily, a sharp, all-pervading tremor that seemed to shake him to the soles of his feet. He opened the inner door of the living-room and recoiled violently against Joel.

'Look!' he cried hoarsely, then, more shrilly, 'O! God, look! What's happened?'

Joel caught him by the shoulders and stared into the room. The door opened in a corner and revealed for the moment only a chiffonier against the wall, a strip of burnished linoleum, and one end of the long table covered with an ironing-blanket. But it seemed as though the very essence of stillness emanated from this room, a stillness breeding fear. Joel thrust his brother-in-law aside and stepped in; then, for a moment, he looked at what lay along the floor behind the door with its battered head close beside the steel fender and a small fire whereat Rosemary's flat-irons had been heating, and where a kettle, empty of its contents, lay overturned. His dark face whitened, and he wheeled upon his companion. Silently he pushed the door to and pressed Henry against the wall beside the cluttered chiffonier, whence rained family photographs, falling to the ground as the room shook at his onslaught.

'What you done it for?' he demanded. 'You! What you done it for?'

'I didn't do it! Here, let go! Call the police; she's been murdered! Some tramp...'

'What you done it for?'

'I didn't do it! What d'you take me for? Call the constable quick, Joel!... Is she dead? Can't anything be done for her?... O! if she suffered...'

Reluctantly, slowly, Joel released him and turned to the human wreckage on the floor.

'Her be dead,' he said; 'killed wi' her own heaviest flat-iron! There it be. Her couldn't a felt much arter furst blow... but her face weren't smashed like that wi' one blow!'

Henry came forward shivering and bent over the crumpled form. He began to cry helplessly, and recoiled.

'Don't touch her!' he cried. 'Fetch Tomson to see her.'

Joel stood solidly regarding him. Suspicion possessed him, and smothered anger. His intended task had been done for him, and

done clumsily ; he believed by the man before him, though for what possible motive he could not conceive. Suspicion, however, was not proof ; meantime to linger here between discovery of the crime and its publication meant dabbling suspicion upon himself. His temper and his terms with Rosemary were too commonly known for him to escape it in any case.

‘Come with I,’ he commanded roughly ; ‘come and call the neighbours and fetch the police.’

The murder of Rosemary Hoblin provided Constable Tomson and the local police force with stronger meat than they knew how to digest. On the face of things public opinion concurred that no one was more likely to have committed the crime than Mrs. Hoblin’s surly and chronically aggrieved husband, but deeper penetration into facts revealed that his personal alibi was complete. Finger-prints on the flat-iron there were none. It had been grasped with an iron-holder evidently burnt in the grate where the iron had fallen. He had set forth to walk on the moor at two o’clock, and his wife had been seen waving to him to come back, a signal which he had ignored. Neighbours had noticed her between two and three crossing her yard to the washhouse and back again with clean clothes in her arms. Soon after then a tramp in a long overcoat and felt hat, a red neckerchief about his throat, had been observed in the side lane by the back door, and in the scullery was found a clot of mud from the lane and a fragment of green-black cloth, evidently torn from the overcoat, clinging to the door latch. Joel and his brother-in-law had been met returning together from the moor, and though at first detained and closely examined were soon exonerated from general suspicion. Police attention became concentrated on discovery of the aforesaid tramp, and here found itself singularly baulked. Throughout the country the gentlemen of the road were rounded up ; the casual wards of the workhouses were combed through, suspect after suspect examined and released for want of conclusive evidence. Scotland Yard presently took a hand in the game, and long after the daily papers had ceased to concern themselves in the matter, emissaries of the law continued to ferret for information and to watch the somewhat strange *ménage* now dwelling in the village shop, with thoughtful, unobserved attention, what time village gossip discussed and re-discussed the terms of Mrs. Hoblin’s will.

For it soon became known that a week before her death Rosemary Hoblin had driven to a lawyer’s office in the market town,

and then and there made and signed a fresh will by which her entire property passed to her bankrupt brother, ignoring her husband ; and much speculation the fact created. There were even those who favoured the view that Joel had hired an assassin in revenge ; but against this had to be set his patent and staggered surprise when the news was conveyed to him. As for Henry Pike, though Rosemary's death saved him from destitution and provided him with a sound business, his grief, and the known affection between brother and sister, punctuated though it was with quarrels, turned aside the edge of accusation.

She had been prepared to give him a home, to take him into partnership ; they were on excellent terms at the time of her death ; why, then, should he have a hand in her killing ? Moreover now, with great generosity, he had made a full partner of his sister's husband and was himself sobered and reformed. The two men settled down together after the funeral as though tragedy had brought them friendship.

It was this fact which particularly interested Mark Pettrill, commercial traveller and detective, who periodically turned up at the grocery counter on behalf of a firm of biscuit manufacturers. A second point of deep interest he found in Henry Pike's new sobriety. Henry seemed fearful of drink, and though, as the local doctor could testify, there were spells when craving shook him like a palsy, he kept away from it. Not even in secret and at home did he swallow alcohol, and for a while the violence of this curative method brought him almost to death's door. Himself he attributed his strength of will to grief and a new fear of the Lord. Mark Pettrill wondered whether any other fear had to do with it at all, and set himself to sound Joel Hoblin as tactfully as a commercial traveller might. This process, however, was like dipping into a dry well.

So came summer, and the ripe fruits of the earth, and on early closing days Joel made pilgrimage to the dingle by the ash-stump where a few small white bones were already bleached and every feather departed by the mysterious agencies of busy nature.

He made other pilgrimages too, at intervals, for Henry now did much of his work in shop and garden. A path trickled downhill through woodland, from Henry's erstwhile farm to the lane behind house and shop. Joel walked here of whiles, ruminating, and looking about him with observant eyes as he smoked. He traversed the small wood from end to end until it might have been thought that he knew every inch of its underbrush and bramble and sought for something amid its damp fern. The only large specimen of timber

in the coppice, a wide-spread oak, thick-girthed, heavy-branched, afforded him hours of shady cogitation, until one afternoon he climbed with surprising dexterity among its foliage and looked down into the deceptive shell of its hollow waist. With crooked stick he fished about in this interior, drawing to light at last an ancient semi-clerical hat which he hooked upon a branch while he continued investigations, rewarded, after some strain upon his waistband, by the salvage of a mouldy red white-speckled cotton kerchief and a ponderous greatcoat made somewhere in the eighteen-fifties and worn once upon a time, Joel felt convinced, by Henry's father. He hung these fresh items high among the leafage, where they were visible only to anyone standing close against the bole of the tree and looking intently upward. Then he descended, and stood panting upon the mossy turf.

Henry was attending to the shop when he returned from his leafy sojourn, but custom for the moment was slack, and at a word from Joel, Pike handed over the duties of the counter to a sandy youth recently hired as assistant.

'I want 'ee to come for a walk, Henry,' explained Joel in the living-room.

'A walk? Now? What's the idea?'

'There's summat I want to discuss with 'ee, out in the open. The day's fine, and theer b'ain't no reason why we shouldn't stroll for half an hour. Let's go up to the copse and smoke a pipe in th' shade.'

A hot summer had early parched the grassy slope and darkened the woodland foliage into heavy, almost thunderous green. The silent time of the year had come, the time of finished mating and rest of fulfilment, when acorns begin to ripen and nests to be deserted of fluttering young. Autumn and decay were still things of the future, but spring and youth were no less of the past. Henry eyed the coppice as they approached it with dislike.

'It's too close in there,' he demurred; 'let's sit down and talk, if you want to, outside.'

'Noa!' Joel was very determined; 'I've found a bird's nest I want to show 'ee.'

Henry glanced at him suspiciously.

'At this time o' year?' he queried, faltering.

'At this here time o' year, and no sooner,' replied Joel, leading the way to the big oak. 'Here's an old feller, now, as has served to nest more generations o' birds than you nor I could count, and some

queer ones, too. Stand close up to the bole, man, and look up'ard, and you'll see the eggs I found in thik nest I told 'ee of.'

With a sudden slackness of muscle, as though Joel had smitten him behind the knee, Henry leant against the tree-trunk and looked up into its gnarled branches.

'Trees,' said Joel, in his usual growling tone, 'ain't allus safe for nesting. Times they'm cut down, times they'm blown down, times boys goes a-climbin' to see what they can find. Why, I've knowed boys hide *inside* a holler tree afore now !'

'Damn you !' said Henry.

'I mid 'a bin damned but fer you, man,' replied Joel, lighting his pipe. 'What *you* did I'd had a mind to do mysel'. I do thank God now that the devil and I walked together to no purpose. Hang 'ee I could an' I chose, Henry ; you've half known it ever since us comed down from the moor that artemnoon. You wanted to leave here, to sell up and go ; but I said "Noa" and you stayed. For why ? Partner you made I ; for why ? You'd 'a liked to have cleared all Rosemary's things, petticuts and ornymints and the like, out o' th' house, but again I said "Noa" and you touched nary one. For why ? You'm feared to drink, and you be sober as a judge. You lock your bedroom door o' nights and lies talkin' in your sleep where none can hear. For why ? I'll tell 'ee. Because you cried out to I when us entered thik room *afore you looked behind the door*. Theer were a strip tored from your shirt cuff, Henry ; untidy and not like 'ee generally speakin'. It had blood on it afore you burnt it, or I'm a fool.'

Pike, during this harangue, had recovered his wits, and stood facing his brother-in-law in an attitude of defiance.

'What are you going to do about it ?' he questioned quickly. 'You hated her. Will you hang me for freeing you ?'

Joel shook his grey head.

'Not hanging for you,' he answered ; ' 'tis too good.'

The menace of his tone sent Henry's hands flying into an attitude of self-defence, but again the badger-hued head was shaken at him.

'I'll not throttle 'ee, Henry. Theer's more ways than one o' killin' a cat . . . or a stoat. I could do it tidier nor you did. Me grandmam weren't a wise woman fer nothink, nor me her grandson fer nowt. But I b'ain't doin' none o' that, not now. For why ? Because I be watchin' a man walkin' daily along hell's edge. At first I were 'raged agin 'ee fer forestallin' of I ; but then I comed to my senses, and I were 'raged agin 'ee fer takin' her away. I thought

I hated her; but fer twenty-five year did I live with my torment, as I did call her, and now I do miss her sore. I could dig into the earth wi' my two bare hands if that would raise her.'

There was a sincerity of pain in his voice that set Henry staring. 'Don't!' he said thickly; 'I was mad to do it! Man, I be worse nor Cain!'

'Aye!' agreed Joel. 'I've watched 'ee, countin' the money from *her* till; diggin' in *her* garden; afeared to break away. Theer you'll bide, wi' her things about 'ee for the rest of yer life, and herself settin' waitin' for 'ee 'tother side th' grave. I'll see to that!'

'You mean . . .'

'Ye'll tread the straight and narrer path wi' my hand ahind 'ee. And you'll treat I to no flatirons nor Tom-Ann pisoning from tinned salmon nor any other muck. For why? Because I've made a will too, and it be safe to the lawyer's, and him alone to open it on the day o' my death. And in that will I do tell all I know. So you'll be wanten of I to survive 'ee, I reckon.'

Henry had grown limp once more, a creature of sawdust and paper, but Joel's next words galvanised him into action.

'See here,' said Joel, producing something folded from under his coat, 'I ha' brought along a sack. Up and bring down the eggs from this tree, and us'll take and burn 'em in th' new i-cinerator. Thik coat'll have to be cut up and burnt in small pieces, else the friez'll smell summat cruel and fetch Tomson sniffin' along. Notice how often he do still pass our gate?'

The travelling representative of Banks' Biscuits put in his monthly call at the shop of Pike and Hoblin on the following morning, when Henry alone was on duty. Henry's habit of leaning both hands upon the counter, bony wrists exposed, as he talked to his acquaintances during the slacker moments of a busy day materially assisted the sudden snapping on of handcuffs. He did not show fight, but looked stupidly first at the strange gear, then at the plain clothes man immediately behind Pettrill.

'Did Joel split?' he asked.

'No,' replied the detective; 'but there was a bird in the bushes at Farm Copse yesterday.'

'Where's Joel, then?'

'We've got him just this moment . . . accessory after the fact in the act of tryin' to destroy evidence in his incinerator.'

'Ah!' said Henry, like one who heaves a sigh of relief; and went with them quietly.

AN ANGLICAN DIEHARD.

*(A paper read before the Eton College Ascham Society,
February 17th, 1928.)*

I WISH to recall a sturdy figure from the past, whose memory, although I never saw him, has long been vivid in my mind, George Anthony Denison, Archdeacon of Taunton, for fifty-one years Vicar of my father's parish of East Brent, and still its matchless patron and hero.

He was born in 1805 and died in 1896. His life is thus set fair and square within the majestic frame of nineteenth-century England, upon whose men and manners we look now with amazement, condescension and curiosity. In his self-confidence, his directness, his seriousness and his intensity, he is fully representative of his age, and in the ecclesiastical sphere he touches at some point or other nearly all his great contemporaries, and acts and reacts vigorously upon each of them. At the same time, unlike most of them, he is rooted in the life of rural England, takes from it its heartiness, its loyalty and its strength, and leaves upon it, as upon the Church at large, a vigorous stamp and a strong tradition. Like many other great ecclesiastics his life is crowned with the halo of extreme old age, which has always become the heads of churchmen exceedingly. We do well when we can to look at their portraits before this halo is acquired, as our views are inevitably and rightly coloured by the physical appearances of men.

In the case of the Victorians the natural tendency to regard them as having always been grandfathers is considerably exaggerated by the fact that photography made portraits much commoner at the end than at the middle of the century. How many who have in their mind a familiar picture of Gladstone or Disraeli towards the end of their careers have an equally firm idea of their appearance in the 'forties and 'fifties? The early portraits of Bismarck are not the least interesting feature in Ludwig's biography. For my lesser example I must confess to some surprise and delight in meeting for the first time the picture, made in middle age, of one

with whose later features, in beard and skull cap, I had long been familiar. In this portrait there was vividly expressed the character of the churchman militant, the successor in spirit, if not in fame, of Athanasius, Hildebrand, Bernard, Laud, who fought his case for four years through all the farcical, tortuous courts of the Establishment, who once turned the lay-pope Gladstone from his seat at the university and in all the fights of fifty years was foremost with the thunderbolts of anathema for heresy, and of rage and scorn for the mean-spirited disciples of Erastus.

His father was a Nottinghamshire squire and Member of Parliament, the nephew and heir of a line of rich merchants of Yorkshire. Of his children he sent six to Eton, but one to Harrow; the eldest became Speaker of the Commons for 1857-72, and was raised to the peerage as Viscount Ossington on his retirement; another became Bishop of Salisbury, another Governor of Madras, and another Fellow of All Souls and Deputy Judge Advocate; a daughter made for George Anthony a useful ally by marrying one of the foremost ecclesiastical lawyers of the day, Sir Robert Phillimore.

George Anthony went to Eton at the age of eleven and a half, after being initiated at two other schools. At the first of these there was a curious form of procedure with school offences which deserves recording; the offender was whipped, but the whole school sent their confession of his crime to their various parents in a set form, as follows:

‘My dear parents, we have committed a great sin. For William Denison spat on the Usher’s back as we went to bed.

‘I remain,

‘Your affectionate son,

‘Arthur Shirt.’

There were four Shirt brothers and their vicarious confessions, at the rate of postage at the time, cost their parents 2s. 8d. Or again:

‘My dear Parents, we have committed a great sin. For we have bought apple tarts without the leave of the Master when we have plenty to eat, and that of the best quality.

‘I remain, etc.’

From the first example, where the principle of communal punishment and responsibility seems carried to an unprecedented

length, it might be possible to deduce the origin of that corporate view of the Church which the Archdeacon was later to expound. For Eton, where he only remained two years, till he was fourteen, Denison retained an affection but not much respect. He preserved an indelible reverence, however, for Keate, who had whipped him for bathing at a forbidden hour and lying about it, and later he despised the prudery which abolished the Head Master's leaving tip: he had dropped his £10 note, and Keate had put his foot on it—he at least had no false delicacy on the subject. When he was seventy, the Archdeacon said that he did not observe that the reform in this, as in other things, had done Eton any good. Even in his own day the teaching of Greek and Latin was not what it was. He held strong views on this and was not diffident in proposing remedies, which on the whole are not to be admired. On one point only did he show any educational enlightenment, and that resolutely in his ninetieth year: 'As for writing Latin verses, as a rule for a school, I despise it more than I can say.'

At fourteen he was taken home and delivered, along with some of his brothers, to the absolute authority of a tutor much feared and respected, Charles Drury, who had also been his one successful instructor at Eton. Drury had the power of the birch and used it, 'for a gross grammatical blunder in your Greek,' and exacted fifty lines of 'Paradise Lost' at 8 o'clock punctually each morning, until the whole was learnt. Eight hours' work a day, one day's hunting a fortnight, and whenever the hounds were heard in the neighbouring woods 'down with books and away out of door or window.' An idyll of education a century ago, justified by Denison's academic successes. At Oxford he won, among other distinctions, the Chancellor's Prize for Latin Essay, became a Fellow of Oriel, and figures for 1836 in that charming piece of antiquarian research which fills so large a space in our calendar, the list of the Newcastle Examiners. On that occasion Hawtrey told him a story which I have failed to elucidate. 'On two successive nights the Head Master's garden door had been painted red; the third night he lay in wait: about twelve he heard the brush, opened the door suddenly, and there was the Provost, Goodall, in full dress, with paint-pot and brush: closed the door hastily and retired. Next day he asked a common friend if he had seen the Provost lately, and how he was. "Oh! quite well, I was with him rather late last night."' In those days Etonians knew well who the painting Provost was. Do they still?

After taking his Oriel Fellowship, he did the Grand Tour in due course, with his old tutor, now weighing near twenty stone and still enjoying the same respect and obedience. Our great-grandfathers' accounts of the Grand Tour are often as dull as the objects which they brought back from it. Too often they give the same impression of conventional Philistinism as its modern supplanter the Transatlantics' 'Trip to Europe' to-day, but it must, I think, have been more picturesque. Among the conventions was the impromptu at St. Bernard, some verses in the monks' visiting book. Denison's and Drury's were begun on the Rhine six weeks before and delivered only as the inspiration of an after-thought at the moment of their departure.

More interesting is a visit to Montacute House in the 'forties. Old Mr. Phelps was heard to say to his butler, 'John, step down and bring up 400 bottles of port wine.' Denison too believed in the virtues of hospitality.

Denison began his connection with the Church in the Common Room of Oriel on the eve of the Oxford Movement, and in view of his whole career it would be natural to assume that this was the birthplace of his ecclesiastical principles. It may be so, but in that curiously stiff society which included, within a few years, Newman, Keble, Pusey, R. H. Froude, Arnold, and Hampden, Denison was the friend, but not the intimate friend of his famous contemporaries. He was not a great theologian like Pusey, he had not the subtlety, the grace and the style of Newman, and his saintliness was by no means of Keble's gentle order. And he was soon the friend and brother of bishops. His nature was boisterous and English, as downright as any Protestant's, and it is not easy to see him at the fountain-head of a movement which sprang from books, prayer, reflection. But when it needed force and soldiery, when he was himself committed to the offices of the Church and realised their implications, he was with it, and the influence, perhaps unconscious, of these deeper personalities gave new conviction and direction to a natural Tory, a natural authoritarian, and a natural lust for battle.

In 1832 Bishop Bagot made him his chaplain and curate at Cuddesdon, in 1837 his brother, Edward Denison, became Bishop of Salisbury, and within a few months rewarded him with a vicarage in Dorset. By 1845 Edward had found George Anthony an inconvenient subordinate and removed him to the neighbouring diocese, which he was administering in the illness of its own bishop.

Soon afterwards George Anthony's old friend Bishop Bagot came to Bath and Wells, and the vicar of East Brent became his examining chaplain and Archdeacon of Taunton. He had thus a stake in the established order which was not very compatible with the High Churchmanship of the day, and which more conventional supporters of the Establishment soon endeavoured to uproot.

These preferments coincided with the development of the Oxford Movement down to its crisis in 1845, and with what had largely provoked it, the growing attack on the official position of the Church. This position in all its implications, Denison gave himself to defend with the same vigour and bustle which Pio Nono was giving to the same task at the same time, on a different scale, under different conditions. To them both the Church was a divine society, with divine authority, independent of the State, over all men, not limited to the voluntary submission of its members. To them both human life swayed between two sharp antitheses, good and evil, mind and matter, the Church and the World, pride and obedience, and, in time of war, when, so to speak, the State goes wrong, Church and State. Pio Nono defined the forces which opposed him with a superb candour in that splendid monument of unblushing obscurantism, the Syllabus of 1864. To Denison these forces were defined less picturesquely but no less clearly: they were six instead of eighty:—

- (1) The Nonconformist Power.
- (2) The Roman Catholic Power—for neither of these had a place in the divine intentions for England.
- (3) The Jewish Power.
- (4) The Erastian Power.
- (5) The Indifferent Power.
- (6) The Critical and Scientific Power.

And on the side of the defence:—

- (1) The Church Power.
- (2) The Establishment Power.

Thus did this general take stock of the battle-field before the fight. Two armies, and those ill-disciplined, against six. The odds were heavy.

It is evident that one who rested his defence on the inherent authority of the Church would fight with greater conviction than the bishops of the day, who were only gradually emerging from

the Hanoverian subservience, and who, without much attention to the issue as a whole, regarded each part on its own merits, as a matter for compromise and negotiation, looking not to the Church but to the Conservative party, for support. A support which Denison despised; he gloried in the name of Tory but defined a Conservative as a man who keeps what is entrusted to him to keep till he is asked to give it up; then he gives it up.

Apart from Irish Disestablishment the main issues on which Church and State began to part company in the nineteenth century were Church Rate, Divorce, and Education. In each of these Denison defended the extreme claims of the Church and refused to countenance any diminution of her rights. Each concession, however small, each successive compromise made by the bishops, was in his eyes a weak and cowardly betrayal of a sacred trust, and a victory of the adverse powers. Each enlargement of the sphere of the State was a triumph of religious 'Indifferentism,' of the 'World,' and made the position of the Establishment, in which he at first believed, increasingly untenable. And yet he fought each engagement as if the future of the whole war depended on it alone, in the spirit of the one prophet in Israel, and after each defeat, for his victories were rarely anything but ephemeral, rushed into the next battle with unrelenting energy and pugnacity. In meetings of all kinds, in petitions to Parliament, in canvassing of Church societies, in letters to ecclesiastics, to ministers, to *The Times*, he was the constant rallying-point of a losing cause. After long discussion, after tedious negotiation, meeting or committee or Convocation would arrive at length at another *modus vivendi*, Anglican diplomacy would achieve again its constant goal, 'a judicious compromise.' And then the Archdeacon bursts in upon the scene, or arrives late upon the platform: 'Gentleman, you must be mad'—and moves an amendment, one of those troublesome, everlasting amendments; the lagging army wearily responds, and often the whole judicious structure topples to the ground. 'Keep Denison away,' writes one bishop to another, as well he might, for the Archdeacon hated compromise on principle, 'prudence,' he said, 'was a mean little virtue,' and the rank and file had a strange manner of running up to London at his telegrams and responding to his lash. Sometimes it was easier, they had only to put notes into envelopes, but he would have reminded hundreds of them to post them.

The first thirty years in which the State asserts its control

over Education from 1840-1870 in the face of the wavering and irresolute opposition of the Church make now, like most education controversies, a history which is in detail extremely wearying and complicated. But the position of the Archdeacon at least is refreshingly clear. Education is a whole, religion is its spirit, the Church is the spring of religious teaching ; hence religious instruction cannot be regulated and segregated into a few hours a week on a curriculum imposed by the civil power, and into schools founded by the Church Nonconformists cannot impose their conditions of entry ; if the State does not wish to support its own official religion, it can make separate provision for them. A committee of management in each village and parish is as contemptible a thing as the ' Committee of Council on Education ' in London ; the higher control is the affair of Bishops and Archbishops ; by the ' Concordat ' of 1840 the State has recognised that, and locally the trust deeds place control in the parish priest alone. But surely, said the other side, the State must control what it supports financially. Yes, certainly, replied the Archdeacon, it must see that the building site is secure and that the spirit of the trust deeds is observed, but anything more is interference. Hence anathema to all conscience clauses, management clauses, State inspectors, and all the other apparatus of the six adverse powers. They shall be kept out of the statute book as long as possible, and they shall certainly be kept out of East Brent. And so they were. When, about 1847, it was clear to Denison that the State was not going to observe the Concordat of 1840, he closed the doors of the Parish School on the Government Inspector, and wrote to him as follows :—' My dear Bellairs—I love you very much.' This was more than an ironical formula, for Denison had an engaging manner of speaking of most of his adversaries from Gladstone downwards as his ' very dear friend,' and with an unvarying consistency which won him the affection of many of his opponents, and the respect of all of them, he distinguished the measure from the man. ' My dear Bellairs—I love you very much, but if you ever come here again to inspect, I lock the doors of the school and tell the boys to put you in the pond.' Bellairs never did come again. Secretary of Committee of Council ' blustered a good deal, and then subsided, as he could not help doing.' But unfortunately ' my dear Bellairs' ' successor, ' my dear friend Tinling, who then held the office in these parts,' proposed some years later to inspect. Denison changed his tactics and replied, ' Oh come by all means ;

I shall never ask for a sixpence of their money, and I think them quite as mischievous as I ever did, but pray come if you like, always very glad to see you.' 'My dear friend Tinling' arrived, and on the Archdeacon coming in at the end of the inspection to see how things were getting on, Mr. Tinling asked if the children could sing. So they sang their favourite song, which Mrs. Denison had taught them :—'Goosey, Goosey, Gander,' ending with the verse :

'Old father longlegs
Wouldn't say his prayers,
Take him by the left leg,
Take him by the left leg,
Take him by the left leg,
And throw him downstairs.'

Tinling did not quite know what to make of it, Denison saw in it the image of the controversy between the Committee of Council and himself, the 'fun of the thing' overcame him and he retreated. 'I had reason to think,' he said, 'that my dear friend thought it was all concocted to throw ridicule on his inspection.'

During the Archdeacon's reign an inspector never came to East Brent again and the Archdeacon was most unjustly blamed for the incident in the House of Commons. From 1847 to his death he made his own provision for the school, and like the prisoner of the Vatican accepted not a farthing from the usurpers. However, outside East Brent he had lost his battle; although not without inflicting a more serious wound on a dear friend more eminent than Tinling or Bellairs.

The representation of the University of Oxford was a prize which Mr. Gladstone admitted that he had 'desired with an almost passionate fondness,' and in 1847 his clerical constituents gratified the desire of one whose churchmanship was so unquestioned. Keble and Pusey were among his supporters, and great was their dismay when six years later, in a crisis of the education controversy, Denison suddenly opposed Mr. Gladstone's re-election. A man, in his view, could not be trusted who joined a Whig Government that favoured a Conscience Clause. 'And so,' as he said, 'I did what I could, with all my regard and respect for the man and with a deep and abiding sense of his great personal kindness to me, to take away his seat.' The Church vote was split, Mr. Gladstone was returned, and Denison, and not

Gladstone, was in the eyes of Keble and others the traitor to the cause.

Eleven years later the Church was still puzzled in what light to regard Mr. Gladstone's churchmanship, but the convictions of the Archdeacon, vigorously disseminated, had cast considerable suspicions. In 1864 the opportunity arrived. After intrigues in the precincts of Parliament under the nose of his brother the Speaker, Gladstone's supporter, and elsewhere, Denison was strong enough to propose another candidate. At the last moment the conspirators' courage failed, and Denison arrived at their meeting to find a resolution being put which began: 'In the event of Mr. Gladstone retiring.' Denison seized the Resolution, threw it on the table, 'Gentlemen,' he said, 'I have not the honour of knowing many of you, but I think, and must say, that it seems to me you are mad. If this is all we have come together to do we had better have stayed at home.' Silence. 'I don't remember to have been more angry any day of my life.' Amendment: 'That it is the opinion of this meeting that the return of Mr. Gladstone for the University of Oxford is to be opposed.' In three minutes the amendment was carried, *nem. con.* At the election next year Mr. Gladstone lost his seat.

Nevertheless the moral authority of Mr. Gladstone, like that of some schismatic Pope, or medieval Emperor, not fully deprived of office, his heresy not fully proved, still lay heavy on the Church, and if he had scruples in opposing her, ecclesiastics too had scruples in opposing him. Something of this uneasiness of mind, as well as a more personal feeling, may have invaded even the inflexible spirit of the Archdeacon as he lay seriously ill five years later. 'From a sick bed,' which, as he said, 'tests many cravings of the soul,' he wrote to ask 'pardon for everything he had written or said which may have appeared to lack charity.' To which the ex-member for the University extended a generous reply: 'I do not think you have given me any occasion to exercise the virtue of forgiveness, but if you had, I think there could be no one to whom it would be more easy and delightful to put it in practice.' The same interchange of remorse and forgiveness, so characteristic of the solemn warm-heartedness of Victorian England, had before this passed between Denison and Newman after the lapse of twenty-five years, although here it was Newman whose conscience remembered past instances of harshness at Oriel, and Denison who had forgotten them.

We come now to a second side of the Archdeacon's activities. A Pio Nono in the English Church is certainly in a very difficult position. Beside those in the Vatican Armoury, his weapons are but pins and pocket-knives, and he has need of a double courage. Well for him if, when the walls of the city temporal had fallen, he could retire within the impregnable keep of Infallibility. We see not principalities and powers alone, Whig Ministers and State inspectors of schools, but wolves within the fold itself, and within the very borders of the Church, the most insidious enemies of the Faith. Natural that these should be supported by the Powers without, notably by the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council, in the Gorham Case. Two solemn protests read in East Brent Vestry before Churchwardens and witnesses: Protest A, 'In the name of the most Holy Trinity, Amen,' declaring the judgement of Secular Courts in matters of doctrine null and void. Protest B, 'In the name of the Most Holy Trinity, Amen,' declaring that the Church must be purged of heresy, and formally affirm her faith in the Holy Sacrament of Baptism. Protests A and B forwarded to the Bishop. Mean little Parliament-man asks in the House of Commons whether Mr. Denison denies the supremacy of the Crown in matters ecclesiastical. Lord John Russell explains the nature of Mr. Denison's belief in that matter. A further protest with Manning's name at the head and Denison's at the foot. The Bishops do nothing. Manning goes to Rome, Denison sticks to his post. Such was the first engagement.

Catholic belief in the Sacraments, insistence on the Real Presence, are the natural accompaniments of the authoritarian temperament and the authoritarian view of the Church, whose office they enormously strengthen, and it was in defence of the second Sacrament four years after the attack on the first that Denison acquired his greatest prominence. For four years he fought this fight in his own person. Each clumsy piece in the judicial artillery of Erastianism was rolled cumbrously up against him, and then rolled as cumbrously away. For those who at the present day would like to see enforced on recalcitrant priests the religious ideas of the House of Commons, the process is not uninteresting; it has since the Act of 1874 gained slightly in simplification and not at all in public respect. Its main stages were as follows:

- (I) Two successive Diocesan Bishops (of Bath and Wells) were asked to prosecute and refused to do so.

- (II) The Archbishop was asked to issue a Commission under the Church Discipline Act.
- (III) The Commissioners stated there was a case for further proceeding.
- (IV) The Archbishop declined to constitute a court under the Act or proceed any further.
- (V) The Archbishop was compelled to do so by action in the court of Queen's Bench.
- (VI) Two years after the opening of the case the Archbishop, sitting in a Diocesan Court, examined the charges made against the Archdeacon, and made a declaration condemning him on some of them by the authority of the 39 Articles, and depriving him of his Vicarage and Archdeaconry.
- (VII) Denison appealed to the Court of the Province and the court revised the former decision on a legal objection.
- (VIII) The prosecutor appealed to the Court of Final Appeal, who rejected his appeal.

Denison's deductions from the Doctrine of the Real Presence to which exception was taken were that the wicked too received the Body and Blood of Christ though to their damnation, thus denying the receptionist theory of the Doctrine; and secondly that worship was due to the Real Presence though not to the consecrated elements. This his opponents held to be a distinction without a difference.

In these struggles, as is usual in Anglican disputes, more issues than theology were involved. The relations, for instance, between Church and State, and also the relations between East and South Brent. On opposite sides of a solitary hill, overlooking the vale of Glastonbury, with their backs to each other, these two villages, the seats or the breeding-grounds of Priors, Rural Deans, Archdeacons and Bishops have always had a sort of ecclesiastical eminence over the surrounding moors, and a consequent rivalry of each other. The Vicar of South Brent was a dear friend of the Archdeacon of Taunton, but he was a persistent and virulent Protestant, and with the same feelings towards him as Denison had towards Mr. Gladstone, he decided that he must do what he could to take away his seat. The Vicar of South Brent, Mr. Ditcher, was the prosecutor and mover in this case, and for four years war

raged around Brent Knoll. After the discomfiture of Mr. Ditcher, peace was at once restored, the antagonists marched together in the defence of the Athanasian Creed, and, when the time came, the funeral eulogy of Mr. Ditcher was delivered in his own church by his one-time enemy. The wheel is now come full cycle and the grandchildren of Mr. Ditcher's flock enjoy at the present day the ministrations of an active and eloquent Anglo-Catholic.

In the heat of the battle, the Archdeacon had also laid the firm foundations of his local fame and of his personal popularity among the farmers of Somerset. In 1857 he established the East Brent Harvest Home, which has spread from there over the whole country, and is, in its place of origin, still preserved in unrivalled splendour; church and dinner and dancing, procession of fifty plum-puddings with band, a mammoth cheese and a five-foot loaf; speeches and toasts in a tent hung with mottoes bucolic and pious; the labourers and visitors served by the farmers and their sons. Here is the Archdeacon's account of one of them (1883):

'Harvest Home great success, everybody highly pleased, two grand balls, a thousand people in tent on Tuesday night, five hundred Wed. night. Very fine music, dressing in best taste, manners and general demeanour perfect; no doubt an admirable institution, should be witnessed to be comprehended. Dancing till twelve Wednesday night; then I told them they were to go. They cheered and thanked, and in ten minutes the tent was cleared, and all went away quietly.'

'I told them they were to go.' Here is the patriarchal note, squire and parson in one, in the enjoyment of a prestige such as rarely either possesses. Squires are rare in that district, and the Archdeacon's energy and wealth were given as freely in the defence of agriculture as of theology. At his own expense he established an elaborate water supply for the village, and fought doughtily in defence of Cheddar cheese against its spurious American imitators. Legend, perhaps exaggerated, says that in a glass case in his hall he reserved for fifty years an incorruptible piece of the local product, and challenged any American to do the same with his. Perhaps it was not therefore a pure theological zeal which brought the whole village, man, woman and child, to Highbridge station to welcome his return after a triumphal vindication by the highest court in the land, caused the horses to be yoked at the parish boundaries and men

to take their place to bear the victor, amid cheers, to render thanks in the church. So active an exhibition of rustic sympathy is not recorded when the Archdeacon passed again from the defence to the attack, but after such signs of loyalty, there is no reason to call in question the doctrinal ardour of East Brent. Its attitude when Jowett, Temple, and Colenso suffered the successive blows of this champion of orthodoxy and cheese was doubtless one of unswerving loyalty and of mystified delighted admiration. In August 1914, he had become, for one old woman, almost a Barbarossa asleep beneath the Kyffhäuser Berg. 'I wish the Archdeacon were here—I don't know whether he'd 'a stopped the war, but he *were* a man for doing things.'

Under his untiring direction the votes of the country clergy were collected to visit condemnation and wrath upon the authors of 'Essays and Reviews.' By 467 to 395 votes, Jowett received no increase of his salary of £40 per annum as Regius Professor of Greek, and when Christ Church made up the amount, the Archdeacon said that he left Christ Church to answer for its own sins; at least the University had not fallen into the pit. When Temple was made Bishop of Exeter, Pusey described the choice as 'the most frightful enormity ever perpetrated by a Prime Minister' and Denison made public protest at Morning and Evening Prayer at East Brent and was prepared to do the same in Convocation, if Temple had not promised that his essay would appear in no future edition of the work. Most orthodox opinion thought that Temple was only in bad company, but Denison saw in his essay, the first in the book, on 'The Education of the World,' the germ from which the whole evil logically and naturally sprang. On the whole book there was solemn and collective punishment as well, but alas! how slow in coming, how torpid was the zeal of the assembled Convocation! Brother clergy needed much goading to be sent about their duty. 'It had taken,' he complained, 'three years, one hundred and nineteen days to bring about the synodical condemnation of "Essays and Reviews."' Yet it had come at last, and if Lord Chancellor Westbury was not impressed, the Erastian world could derive what comfort it would from his opinion. 'Synodical condemnation, what is that?' said the Lord Chancellor; 'simply nothing, literally no sentence at all.'

Collective punishment on the University too; name off the books, and no further recognition of its proceedings, for he belonged to the days 'when free thinker was a term of reproach' there.

For thirty years and more an increasing tide of heresy, born of the 'Pride of Life,' flowed into the Archdeacon's Index, and an increasing number of ecclesiastical decisions received his degree of nullity and invalidity. When the English Church Union itself refused to condemn Gore's 'Lux Mundi,' he shook off the dust of his feet on it too, and stood alone, undaunted, an Athanasius of this latter age. It is not this, however, which divides him from the present school of Anglo-Catholics. Not that he would not support their doctrine and their practices; he did, and would still and that furiously. But in temper and in scale he is on a different plane. As zealous as any of them in the services of the Church—we find him, for instance, in a hot August in his seventy-sixth year, single-handed, with eight celebrations a week and seventeen other services—he was never a ritualist himself; in his Church the choir was of a hearty eighteenth-century order, unsurplised, men and women together in a Jacobean gallery at the west end, conducted in his earlier years by a band. He was also nothing of an exotic or an alien; Rome was to him an usurper in these islands, and he fought with English fists. He was nothing either of a sectarian, his utterances do not smack of a petty feminine coterie, of 'The Party,' or of the last leader in the 'Church Times.' They come rather from a conscience as stern as any Puritan's, reinforced by a magnificent conception, that of the Divine authority of the Church, clearly visible in idea to his eyes, however ludicrously imperfect in practice. On 'men of every religion and of none' (a favourite phrase of his) he left to the last moment the impression of undiminished buoyancy, honesty and fearlessness. This is the quality of his conviction: 'If any man,' he writes, 'says to me, as many have said, "You speak of these things as if they were known to you as eternally true, and therefore condemn all who do not hold them as you do," I reply they are known to me as eternally true and therefore I do so speak of them, but I condemn no man . . . Do men tell me that the Church is only one sect among many, having great possessions and privileges, derived from the superstition of unenlightened times, I have only one answer. I say that it is a delusion of the devil which makes men so to speak.' Psychologically this was a better argument than a mountain of reasoning. A farce aroused his indignation and contempt. Although for the sake of his country he fought to prevent the secularisation of the State, he became convinced by his experience that the secular principle had definitely won, and he

drew from that the obvious conclusion that the Establishment was a thing of unreality, no longer compatible with the dignity and the freedom of the Church. Under the sudden events of 1927 this truth began to dawn even upon the Bishops.

Let us take a last look at him in battle. He is within a month of his eightieth birthday, but he has before him some ten years more of warfare, meetings, Harvest Homes, resolutions, solemn warnings, crowned by a Jubilee which amounted almost to an apotheosis. It is at Bridgewater, during the election of 1885; his dear friend Mr. Gladstone having betrayed the Church is now, in his view, about to betray the Empire, still preserving his impeccable loyalty to both. The Archdeacon is in the chair. These are his own Jingle-like words, proud and quaint :

'Greater row than I have ever seen last night; three hours of it; no harm done . . . No speaker could be heard at all, so I sat in the chair and shouted to the meeting to hold up hands for and against and declared both resolutions carried. Then row increased. I saw that an attempt would be made to storm the platform and called my troops to the front three-deep. The rush came; women on floor of room rushed before it in wild and screaming mass, were pulled up by us in heap on platform, and passed to back; enemy rushed in; my men gathered round me in the chair . . . Hurling back the foe. No lull of noise, singing, howling. Some few wanted me to go—in which case enemy would have seized platform and held a meeting of their own. I refused to move, said I would sit in chair all night, and my men stood fast. It was beautiful; very like a small Waterloo. I sat in the chair half asleep, drinking water now and then, hat on head, stick in hand, keeping eye on my men on either side of chair, guarding the platform. (Then an armistice arranged by Police.) So I got up, took off my hat, made a first-rate salutation, and told meeting we were going, and that I should remain when all my men were gone, the only one on the platform. Shouts of applause. My men wanted to stay with me, but I said, "Go, every one of you," and drove them away by side entrance . . . This my dispatch from headquarters, morning after battle. I believe that last night has done service to the cause of order and decency, and has not left any increase of ill-humour behind it, but rather the contrary.'

He died in the spring of 1896, and was buried near the path to the school, so that his children's feet might pass by him. But now annually a heavier tread disturbs his body's rest, and the

successor of 'my dear Bellairs' and 'my dear friend Tinling' hears, with something of a tremble, if imagination be his, the dim echo of a legendary refrain :—

‘Goosey, Goosey, gander,
Whither wilt thou wander ?
Old father long legs
Wouldn't say his prayers,
 Take him by the left leg,
 Take him by the left leg,
 Take him by the left leg,
And throw him downstairs.’

And the Archdeacon is most unjustly blamed for the incident.

A. K. WICKHAM.

THE OMNIPOTENT MACHINE!

BY W. F. WATSON.

'THERE is no security against the ultimate development of mechanical consciousness, in the fact of the machines possessing little consciousness now. A mollusc has not much consciousness. Reflect upon the extraordinary advance which machines have made during the last few hundred years, and note how slowly the animal and vegetable kingdoms are advancing. The more highly organised machines are creatures not so much of yesterday, as of the last five minutes, so to speak, in comparison with time.'

Those words were written in 1872 when machinery was emerging from its early infancy, which may be said to have started nearly a hundred years previously, when Crompton's mule was perfected and generally applied to cotton spinning, thereby increasing individual output. For a long time, however, the spindles were worked either entirely by hand, or partially with the aid of horses or water wheels. Meanwhile, many attempts were being made to improve the methods of weaving. As early as 1738 John Kay of Bury excited the wrath of his fellow weavers by designing and employing the device of the fly shuttle, which was the first step towards the complete mechanising of the action required for working a loom. Although the fly shuttle enormously increased the output of a weaver, for some unknown reason it was not applied in the industry to any great extent until twenty-five years later. With the general adoption of the spinning jenny, however, the supplies of yarn greatly exceeded the capacity of the looms, a circumstance which undoubtedly gave the required stimulus to experiments in power looms, which had been taking place from as early as 1678, and which culminated, in 1787, in the perfection, in its first form, of Cartwright's power loom. Although Cartwright's original idea was subsequently improved upon by many other inventors, power looms won their way very gradually. In 1813 there were only 2400 power looms; in 1820, 14,000; in 1829, 55,000; and in 1870 the number had increased to 440,000, whilst to-day there are 700,000 power looms in service.

It necessarily follows that inventive genius was being applied to the development of motive power to meet the increased demand for cotton and cloth, caused by cheapened production. It is

interesting to note that the first recorded heat engine was that of Hero (150 B.C.), which was a primitive steam reaction turbine, consisting of a spherical vessel pivoted on a central axis and supplied with steam through one of the pivots, but from that time until the seventeenth century there is no progress to record. Then follows a long list of inventors. Giovanni Battista della Porta (1601), Solomon de Caus (1615), Giovanni Branca (1629), the Marquess of Worcester (1663), Thomas Savery (1698), who first made the steam engine commercially successful, J. T. Desaguliers, who applied to it the safety valve. The use of the cylinder and piston (long before applied to pumps) in a heat engine was first suggested by Jean de Hautefeuille in 1687, gunpowder being used to make the explosion. Denis Papin's (1690) was, however, the earliest cylinder and piston steam engine, and his plan of using steam was that which afterwards took practical shape in the atmospheric engine of Thomas Newcomen (1705), which began to be introduced for pumping mines six years later. Newcomen's engine apparently held the field until James Watt, a Glasgow instrument maker, so improved upon it as to render it obsolete.

To Richard Trevethick (who, by the way, like many other inventors, died penniless) belongs the distinguished honour of being the first to use a steam carriage on a railway; in 1804 he built a locomotive in the modern sense, to run what was formerly a horse tramway, in Wales; and to George Stephenson belongs the equally distinguished honour of being the builder of the 'Rocket,' the first railway engine, which, on September 27, 1830, drew a train of thirty-four vehicles, making a gross load of ninety tons, at a speed of from ten to twelve miles an hour, for the Stockton and Darlington Railway, thereby establishing the efficiency of the locomotive for all future railways.

The spinning and weaving machinery and the engines of that period were primitive in design and crude in structure, as were the machines in the engineering workshops. In the 'sixties of last century the rapid development of improvements in all kinds of machinery demanded corresponding improvements in engineering machinery, and it was probably the orgy of mechanical inventions which prompted Samuel Butler to write those fascinating chapters, *The Book of Machines*, I, II, and III, in 'Erewhon.' Since 1872, such rapid strides have been made in machinery that one feels bound to admit that the modern mechanical wonders do, in fact, possess consciousness.

Watch an up-to-date automatic machine at work. A bar of steel is placed in the mouth of the machine, which is set in motion. Instantly the chuck closes round it, holding it in a vice-like grip, whilst the tool cuts off the rough end of the bar. As the piece drops into the tray, the tool flies back, the chuck opens, the metal travels forward a definite distance determined by a stop which travels to meet it, the stop flies back, the turret revolves, introducing the first tool which at once begins its work. Having machined the metal to the required length and size (accurately, to a thousandth part of an inch) the tool again flies back, the turret again revolves, and the second tool is applied to the material; and so on for perhaps eight operations. When the article is finished, the parting tool travels along and cuts the thing off. Hour after hour the machine will do its work, accurately and regularly, without the aid of an operator. The setter, a skilled man with several autos under his charge, feeds the machine when necessary, and occasionally tests one to ensure that sizes are being maintained. The latest high-speed tool-steel can make thousands of articles before the edges of the tools wear, causing the sizes to vary.

Then glance at the gear cutter or shaper, which forms the teeth in gear wheels with mathematical precision. A number of blanks are fastened together on a mandrel and placed in the machine. When the revolving cutter has formed a tooth, the mandrel flies back and revolves the required distance, and the next tooth is formed. When the last tooth is cut, a bell rings to warn the setter that that batch is finished, and the machine automatically stops.

Now let us peep at the very latest cylinder grinding machine. The cylinder casting is firmly secured to a plate which remains stationary. The spindle which carries the emery wheel not only revolves at a very high speed, but also rotates round the wall of the cylinder. This automatically traverses the length of the cylinder and returns, and with each stroke the 'cut' is advanced by increasing the radius of the rotating spindle. When the emery wheel has ground the cylinder the exact size required, a sensitive electrical appliance shows it on an indicator. To all appearance this machine possesses consciousness: it is the ante-penultimate word in mechanical ingenuity—it is almost human.

Many pages could be filled with descriptions of other wonders of the modern machine shop. Of giant lathes that rip off turnings as thick as one's arm (woe betide the turner if a piece happens to come into contact with *his* arm!); of monster milling and planing

machines which mow metal at an incredible speed ; of multiple drill presses, the spindles of which can be arranged to any shape, all drilling holes simultaneously ; of intricate boring machines that can almost talk under the guidance of a skilful man ; of huge power hammers, capable of forging a crankshaft to the required size and shape, for all the world as though it was made of green cheese instead of the best toughened chrome nickel steel ; of automatic presses which stamp, pierce, and bend sheet metal to any size and shape.

But let us leave the engineering workshop for a moment and pay a visit to a newspaper printing office. The ear-splitting noise makes it all but impossible to hear each other speak, but observe that gigantic multiple printing press with eight outlets. Note the virgin paper entering at one end, see how it literally flies through the different sets of rollers, taking impressions on both sides, then watch the newspapers issuing from each outlet, printed, cut, folded, and counted in quires. That machine ceaselessly prints thirty-six thousand newspapers an hour ! The production of a modern newspaper is no longer the work of a printer ; it has passed into the hands of the engineer. If we return to the engineers' shop we may be privileged to see the contrivance that was specially designed to machine the huge frames of those giant presses. It is colloquially called the 'creeper,' for the obvious reason that it creeps all over the job. Formerly the frames had to be carted from one department to another to be milled, planed, slotted, drilled, etc., but now it is laid out on the bed of the creeper, levelled up, and clamped down. Then the creeper gets to work, drilling holes here, milling bosses there, digging a corner out somewhere else, until the thing is finished and ready for the erector.

Yes ! These mechanical marvels possess consciousness all right. The operators will tell us that they answer to the lightest touch, they roar and groan if not properly fed with oil. They will splutter and stop if anything interferes with their delicate mechanism. Indeed, as one watches them pulsating with life, doing the work of thousands of men, one wonders whether they possess a soul. Surely the curious drone of a big dynamo is a pæan of joy at being able to provide the people with light, heat, and power ; and the throb of a high-powered internal combustion engine the exultant song of the machine that has conquered time and space !

The machine is more than human.

'It is brisk and active when the man is weary ; it is clear-headed and collected when the man is stupid and dull : it needs no slumber when man must sleep or drop : ever at its post, ever ready for work, its alacrity never flags, its patience never gives in : its might is stronger than combined hundreds, and swifter than the flight of birds : it can burrow beneath the earth, and walk upon the largest rivers and sink not.'

In our boyhood days we were intensely interested in wonderful and imaginative stories about clever inventors and their attempts to produce a mechanical man, capable of doing everything a human being can do, but never in our wildest moments did we think such things possible. Lo and behold ! In this year of grace we read that a 'robot' aviator has been invented.

'The "robot" aviator is a steel figure with "muscles" worked by electricity, and in demonstrations . . . the "robot" showed that it was possible to land a heavy bombing machine without damage at sixty miles an hour. The experiments have progressed so far that it is thought possible to direct the mechanical aeroplane from another aeroplane, and eventually to control it from the ground at a considerable distance.'

A German inventor, we also read, has produced a crewless warship, which can be directed by wireless from a distance. One can only express the devout hope that if there is to be another war—which God forbid !—our clever inventors will, by the time it happens, have invented 'robot' soldiers to be bombed !¹

The paramount question of the day is, whither is the remorseless machine leading us ? Shall we eventually reach an era of 'robotry' ? Shall we emulate the Erewhonians and destroy all machines and inventions for fear they overwhelm mankind ? Or shall we harness the machine and compel it to take us to the land of peace and plenty for all ? In order to arrive at any sort of conclusion it is necessary to examine the immediate effects of the machine upon our economic life, its possible effects upon our future social and economic life, and its general effect upon the psychology of the people. To convey an idea of the immediate effect of the introduction of machinery, one cannot do better than briefly relate a personal experience. After all, an ounce of experience is worth a ton of hypothetical illustrations.

In 1897, when a lad of fifteen, I secured employment at a big

¹ This was written before Eric, the 'robot' tin man, opened the Model Engineering Exhibition.

cycle works. At that time all the component parts of a cycle—crank bolts, seat-lug bolts, axles, ball-bearing races, chain-wheels, pedal axles, etc., etc.—were made by skilled mechanics on centre lathes. That is to say, each article was handled separately, the tool being changed for each operation. For making one small crank bolt, for instance, the turner was paid twopence, the average output being eight an hour. I had been with the firm about six weeks when the first capstan lathe (so called because the tool head, designed to carry six tools, revolved on a centre spindle) was introduced, which, once the tools were set, could be operated by a boy. I happened to be the one chosen for the post, and the first job to be put on the machine was the crank bolts. Within a few days I, an inexperienced lad, was producing crank bolts at the rate of thirty an hour, thus displacing four fully rated mechanics. In the course of a month or two, the firm laid down its first American automatic machine, to which the crank bolts were quickly transferred, and I, in turn, was superseded. Other automatics followed in quick succession until there was a fleet of thirteen, and it was not very long before practically all the cycle parts were produced on these machines, which were set up and tended by *one* mechanic only.

As was to be expected, the turners were alarmed when all except three, who were retained for tools and special jobs, were discharged. They met in the local tavern to discuss the position, and roundly cursed the employers, the machines, and the setter. I remember that the most bitter epithets were hurled at the head of the luckless setter. Such was the heat displayed that I felt sure that, had we been living in less law-abiding times, they would have emulated the Luddites by smashing the machines. But of what avail were their curses and lamentations? Forced to accept the inevitable, they doubtless reported to the local branch of the union that they had been discharged because of slackness, were granted their 'donation' in accordance with rule, and in due course found work elsewhere.

So, displacement of labour, followed by unemployment for the workmen the machine has supplanted, is invariably the first immediate effect of the introduction of any machine or labour-saving device. But the omnipotent machine also cheapens the cost of production. As a result of the introduction of capstan and automatic machines in the cycle works cited above, it was made possible to put a good strong machine on the market at a considerably reduced price, within the reach of most people, in consequence of

which the demand enormously increased, so much so that the factories were kept running day and night. With the accelerated demand came the standardisation of parts, which meant a demand for mechanics to make the necessary tools, gauges, and jigs. Therefore, the men who were driven out of the shop by the omnipotent machine were quickly called back to cope with the impetus given to industry by the boom in cycles arising from the cheapening of production by the all-powerful machines. Thus, up till recently, have things cancelled themselves out.

During the last decade, however, it is quite obvious that we have reached a stage where the development of the machine has so increased man's productivity that fewer and fewer workers are required to produce all that is necessary to satisfy the needs of the people, and when any new machine is devised, the tendency is to permanently displace labour. Take mining, for instance. The machine has enabled the miner to increase his output of coal ; the machine has made it possible to obtain a constant and abundant supply of cheap oil which, with the rapid development of the petrol engine, has cheapened and popularised road transport ; the engineer has facilitated the substitution of oil fuel for coal on battleships and liners : electricity is fast superseding coal and gas for lighting, heating, and motive purposes in office, factory, and home. The cumulative effect of all this is the lessening of the demand for coal, and the unemployment of many thousands of miners. Moreover, the cheapening of the production of coal and its supersession by oil and electricity has not increased the volume of work in other spheres. According to the recent statement of a prominent trade union official, the number of men employed in the heavy iron and steel trades to-day is little more than half what it was before the war, yet the output is nearly the same. Reference to the latest available figures show that in 1925 there were 250,000 people employed in the motor vehicle industries, and the output was 153,000 cars and commercial vehicles. In 1926 the output increased to 180,000, whilst the number of people employed dropped to 241,000. Twenty-seven thousand more vehicles were made by nine thousand less workmen ! Instead of 'making more work,' to use an everyday phrase, the machine is producing redundant workmen.

The problem is, what can be done with, and for, redundant workers ? Many men formerly employed in production have secured posts as salesmen, for which there appears to be some demand at the moment. Faced with increased output and a falling

market through unemployment, the machine owners employ small armies of salesmen whose function it is to persuade people to buy things they do not actually want. The same object is doubtless behind the recent extension of the deferred payments purchasing scheme. Intrigue the people into buying things they are not really in need of, hoping thereby to create a demand which will keep the machines at work, and incidentally provide work for the workless. Praiseworthy efforts are being made to at least ease the situation by drafting some of the unemployed into other districts and occupations, but in view of the fact that other towns and trades are similarly suffering, very few can hope to be placed in this way, and those who do secure alternative employment will probably do so at the expense of other unfortunate workers. Eight thousand have been sent to Canada—a mere drop in the ocean of two millions. Let us hope that Mr. Baldwin's latest letter to British employers will bear fruit.

It is one of the tragic paradoxes of life that the machine which has been designed to bring ease and comfort into the lives of the people, the machine which has annihilated space and conquered the elements, the wonders of inventive genius which are all but human, should bring untold suffering upon thousands of people whose labour helped to make the machines.

Oh that there could be gathered together a National Committee of disinterested men and women with wisdom, courage, and tact, who could rise superior to all creeds and dogmas, and direct their time and energy to solving the plight of workmen rendered redundant by the omnipotent machine !

So much for the machine and its application to industry. Let us now see how it enters into every phase of our social life, the general effect upon the people, and the possible outcome of its continued development.

It would almost be true to say, 'There are machines to the right of us, machines to the left of us ! There are machines to the front of us, and machines to the rear of us,' for, apart from the many thousands who, in order to obtain their livelihood, spend their whole lives in tending them ; and from those indefatigable inventive geniuses who devote all their time to the advancement of the machine, all of us are more or less dependent upon mechanical contrivances for our everyday needs. Pandering as it does to our material needs rather than our spiritual interests, we willingly fly to any machine that will save human effort ; thus we do become

slaves to the machine. Nearly every stitch of clothing we wear is made by machinery. More often than not we shave with a safety razor, which we carefully strop on a mechanical stropper. We clean our machine-made dentures with a machine-made brush. The chances are that the breakfast ham was cured by a machine, and possibly the hen who laid the 'new-laid' eggs was hastened into existence by means of an incubator. The bread, butter, jam, marmalade, cake, rolls, sugar—all are made by machinery; and the milk was taken from a cow by machinery. Tea, coffee, cocoa, and all the cereals are weighed and packed by machinery. Machines made the paper and envelopes which form the morning's correspondence; some of the envelopes are franked instead of stamped—all were cancelled automatically. As I write the news is to hand that a German inventor has devised a machine which will remove one hundred and seventy of the two hundred and seventy-nine bones a herring is reputed to possess !

At the top of the street a road machine is waiting to convey us to the underground machine. Having secured a ticket from the slot machine, we enter the lift, the doors of which automatically close, and we descend into the depths. When we reach the bottom, the doors fly open, we step into the train, the doors automatically close, and off we go. As if that were not sufficient transport machinery for the day thereof, Lord Montagu of Beaulieu recently informed a wondering House of Lords that the time will come when pedestrians will be mechanically propelled across the road by means of escalators !

Slot machines, of course, are legion. Cigarettes, cigars, matches, camera films, chewing gum, scent, stamps, no matter what—put your coins in the slot and they are promptly delivered unto you.

No shop is complete without mechanical tills and automatic weighing machines. In the office there are typewriters, adding machines and calculators, stamping machines and clipping machines, and mechanical indexing arrangements. In the house there is the vacuum carpet cleaner, the knife cleaning and grinding machine; the washing machine and ironing machine; and the automatic lighter has supplanted the homely match. The tobacco we smoke is machine blended; the cigarettes pour out of a Barron machine by the million. There is now no need to go to a theatre for the evening's recreation; all we have to do is to put a record on the gramophone, set the auto-piano to work, or switch on the wireless to get machine-made entertainment to order. Even the

tonsorial artist, although continuing to shave in exactly the same way (minus the 'polishing off') as the immortal Sweeny Todd shaved his victims in the days of long ago, usually cuts, brushes, and waves hair, and massages, by machinery.

Mass production has caught us in its toils and the machine has enslaved us. Just as we build and manufacture in the mass, so do we tend to think, speak, and act in the mass, and in terms of machinery. As we continue increasingly to have things done for us the need for human effort correspondingly decreases. The youth of thirty years ago thought nothing of walking three or four miles to business ; now he jumps a car for a journey of half a mile. Week-end country walks have given place to long bus or charabanc rides. (Apart from the disinclination to use one's legs, a country walk is something of a risky adventure nowadays.) At one time we would usefully occupy our minds making little gadgets to improve and brighten the home ; now we can buy everything we want for a few coppers at the local Woolworth's or Marks & Spencer's.

The machine dominates the mind as well as the body. Stand at any busy street corner and watch the set faces of the drivers of the public conveyances. Note the stiff mechanical actions of the legs and arms as they manipulate steering-wheel, gears, and brake. Similarly with the machine tender in the workshop. He mechanically—even subconsciously—moves a number of levers and the machine does the rest.

We write, calculate, talk, and travel by mechanical means. Presently we shall not need to travel, because telephony and television will enable us to speak and see across continents.

But we are a curious race of people, and London is a wonderful city. With all our marvellous machines and mechanical labour-saving devices, one can always see, outside those great railway termini from whence giant iron steeds, snorting defiance at time and space, begin their non-stop runs to the North, aged weary men pushing heavy brooms in almost futile attempts to keep the roads clean ! At any time of the day one can see long strings of buses, cars, and trams held up by a human 'beast of burden,' struggling with a barrow-load of merchandise ! I remember seeing, one hot summer's day, a weedy youth moiling up a hill on a treadle carrier-tricycle, on the sides of which was emblazoned for all the world and his wife to see, 'Electricity for Everything !' Not the least ironical feature about this incident was the fact that the tricycle belonged to a borough council !

We now come to the most intriguing and problematic question of all—viz. What will be the outcome of the continued advance of the omnipotent machine ? It is quite certain that the machine will advance, still further increasing man's productivity ; still further encroaching upon human actions and lessening the need for human effort. It is equally as certain that the machines will never be destroyed. Progress cannot be stopped, even were it desirable. In the laboratories and experimental workshops research work never ceases. If it is possible to direct an aeroplane or a warship by wireless, who can say how long it will be before motive power will be supplied by wireless ? We know that electricity is obtained by friction and by harnessing the forces of attraction. Where there is attraction there must also be repulsion, and some scientists aver that the forces of repulsion are even more powerful than the forces of attraction, and that if both could be harnessed in the same machine, the only obstacle in the way of perpetual motion would be the fallibility of material. It was recently announced in the Press that the metallurgists had produced a steel that is practically everlasting—by all accounts it simply won't wear out. Imagine the possibilities ! If such a steel can be adapted for tools, the machines may be speeded up fifty to a hundred per cent. Engine and machine parts made of this steel would have almost everlasting life. The possibilities of improvements on machine tools are illimitable ; the vast field of mechanics is being explored day and night—it will not be checked.

In the course of time man's productivity will have increased, and the consumption decreased, to such an extent that only a small minority of people will be employed to supply the people's needs ; and in our social life the machine will dominate far more than it does to-day.

Many people hold the view that we shall eventually become a race of ' robots,' the line of reasoning whereby this conclusion is arrived at being as follows. Arising out of the lessened need for human effort resulting from the continued use of the machine, man is in danger of losing his individuality, and with it that combative instinct hitherto inherent in most of us, and without which there can be no human progress. Curtailment of individuality followed by the crushing of the combative instinct must lead to submissive servility, lack of leadership, and loss of enterprise ; our minds will consequently deteriorate, and we may easily be led to the brink of intellectual stagnation. The workers, through constant association

with the machine, will become mere automatons—just working and sleeping through their lives. They will be entirely segregated from the ruling class, with whom they will not be allowed to associate in any shape or form, much less intermarry. In short, the producers will be completely enslaved by the machine and the ruling class. The ruling class, bereft of the necessity of doing anything for themselves, will devote their lives to idle, dissolute, carnal pleasure; art, literature, and culture becoming as dead as the proverbial dodo. Such is the pessimistic picture portrayed by some of our playwrights, novelists, and cinema picture makers.

The morbid craving of the people for novels, plays, and pictures dealing with crime, violence, problem and sex subjects; the monstrous trash dished up daily in the 'big circulation' Press; and the apparent decadence of art, music, and literature, certainly gives credence to such a line of reasoning, but to suggest that the race will become so enslaved by the machine, so intellectually bankrupt, that the people will have no interest in life apart from machines, bread, and circuses, seems to be a philosophy of despair, and an admission of the superiority of matter over mind. Such loose negative thinking has a delightful disregard for the human factor. Before becoming so completely enslaved, methinks the people would most certainly use the machines to destroy society.

As a matter of fact, 'robots' have existed from time immemorial; they exist now, and will continue to exist in any system of society. There will always be some people who, lacking energy, imagination, ambition, and initiative, will be quite content to be hewers of wood and drawers of water. Whether they operate a machine or work by hand—mechanics, labourers, or clerks—so long as they get a sufficiency of food, clothing, and housing accommodation, they will perform any task, however unpleasant and monotonous, with uncomplaining satisfaction. They desire nothing more than to be allowed to work, eat, and sleep, with an occasional visit to the pictures or theatre, and an annual week at the seaside. They haven't enough imagination to lift themselves out of the rut, and insufficient ambition to envy those who have. Amongst the well-to-do there will always be some with no object in life beyond idle pleasure seeking—who never ask how things are and why. To-day they figure in the divorce courts and night-club raids. But these types do not count in the world's affairs. They just suffer history whilst others make it.

The important factor is that there is an increasing number of

workers who, although forced by economic circumstances to operate a machine or perform monotonous tasks in order to earn their daily bread, are a long way from becoming 'robots.' It must be remembered that the elementary education system has been revolutionised during the past thirty or forty years. The soul-crushing mechanical methods of teaching which prevailed when we were lads have given place to methods calculated to develop individuality, and whilst this individuality and the combative instinct may be temporarily submerged by the machine whilst in the factory, they will have full play after working hours. Indeed, the intelligent worker's mind often reacts to the monotony of his daily work, and he leaves the factory mentally fresh to apply his individuality to other spheres of activity. The active mind must find a suitable outlet, and if the daily task does not require any great mental effort, then the chances are that the mind will be applied elsewhere in leisure hours. That is why so many workers take the liveliest interest in science, art, and literature.

Public librarians tell us that although there is scarcely any diminution in the demand for trashy novels, there is a steady increase in the request for the better type of novel, and for poetry and works on philosophy, history, science, psychology, and other classical subjects. Another encouraging sign of the time is the worker's intense interest in municipal and national affairs. Is it likely that these people will become soulless 'robots'? And they are the men who matter.

Similarly with the non-working classes. Many have ceased to be content to accept all the good things of life, and to 'stand idly by whilst on every wind of the heavens a wasted life goes by.' They are asking in increasing numbers how and why things are; they are ashamed of the glaring inequalities of life, and, recognising the right of the workpeople to a place in the sun, are interesting themselves in their welfare.

Amongst employers there is a distinct reaction against 'robotic' tendencies. 'We do not want a lot of "robots" in the industry, but men who can take an intelligent interest in their work and perform it satisfactorily in the absence of the foreman or manager,' said Dr. A. E. Humphries, Chairman of the National Joint Council for the Flour Milling Industry. One of the subjects before the Committee, set up as a result of the Mond-Turner Industrial Peace Conference, is that of reviving the worker's interest in his occupation.

The future holds for mankind something infinitely better than

'robotry.' Despite the fact that the omnipotent machine at present causes unemployment and brings suffering to the workers: notwithstanding the danger of losing our individuality because of the lessened need for human effort, it may well be that the machine, relieving us of mental effort in the field of production, will enable us to direct our intellect to higher things.

Let us, then, cease to talk about advancing towards 'robotry.' Rather should we visualise a scheme of things wherein the omnipotent machine will be used to do all the dirty and unpleasant work, making life easier and more comfortable for all. Instead of being slaves to the machine, the machine will be the slave of the people; increasing the productivity of man, ensuring employment and adequate remuneration for all, and, with the abundant wealth produced, provide the people with the fullness of life. With extended leisure and minds not exhausted by irksome, unnecessary toil, mankind 'may rise to a point of elevation never yet attained.' The omnipotent machine is destined to lift the race out of 'robotry.'

As the old philosopher in 'Erewhon' said: 'The very nature of the motive power which works the advancement of the machine precludes the possibility of man's life being rendered miserable as well as enslaved.'

LITERARY ACROSTICS.

THE Editor of THE CORNHILL MAGAZINE offers prizes to the value of at least £3 to the most successful solvers of this series of four Literary Acrostics. There will also be consolation prizes, two or more in number: the winners of these will be entitled to choose books to the value of £1 from Mr. Murray's catalogue. And further, every month a similar prize of books will be awarded to the sender of the correct solution that is opened first.

DOUBLE ACROSTIC No. 63.

(The Third of the Series.)

'Frailty, thy name is woman !

A little month ; or ere those shoes were old
With which she follow'd my poor father's body,
Like ——, all ——.'

1. 'Hark, by the bird's song ye may learn the ——.'
2. 'That fawn-skin-dappled hair of hers,
And the blue eye
Dear and dewy,
And that —— fresh air of hers !'
3. 'Most radiant, exquisite, and unmatchable beauty.'
4. 'Follow the ——
Of the dead cold year,
And like dim shadows watch by her sepulchre.'
5. 'Armies and —— and kings,
All carrying different kinds of things,
And marching in so grand a way,
You never saw the like by day.'

RULES.

1. Only one answer may be sent to each light.
2. Every correct light and upright will score one point.
3. With his answer every solver must send the coupon that is printed on page x of 'Book Notes' in the preliminary pages of this issue.

4. At the foot of his answer every solver must write his pseudonym (consisting of one word), and nothing else. His name and address must also be given, and should be written at the back.

5. Solvers must on no account write either the quotations or the references on the same paper as their answers. It is not necessary, or even desirable, to send them at all.

6. Solvers who write a second letter, to correct a previous answer, must send the complete solution as they wish it, and not merely state the desired alteration.

7. Answers to Acrostic No. 63 should be addressed to the Acrostic Editor, THE CORNHILL MAGAZINE, 50A Albemarle Street, London, W. 1, and must arrive not later than November 20.

PROEM: Keats, *On first looking into Chapman's Homer.*

ANSWER TO No. 62.

1. G	ladnes	S
2. O	rien	T
3. O	livi	A
4. D	elf	T
5. L	if	E
6. Y	our	S

LIGHTS:

1. Wordsworth, *Intimations of Immortality.*
2. Milton, *Paradise Lost.*
3. Tennyson, *The Talking Oak.*
4. Longfellow, *Keramos.*
5. Stevenson, *To Will H. Low.*
6. Shakespeare, *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, i. 2.

Acrostic No. 61 ('Europe Cathay'): The Tennyson acrostic did not prove as simple as the Acrostic Editor had anticipated, and the 'Locksley Hall' quotation seems to have given some trouble. Of the 125 answers sent in 107 were correct.

The monthly prize is taken by 'Martin,' whose answer was the first correct one opened. Miss Bidwell, Buckenridge Tower, Teignmouth, Devonshire, will choose books to the value of £1 from Mr. Murray's catalogue.

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